# AN ANALYSIS OF
# STATE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE
# MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1993

Prepared for the
Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission
by the
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July 6, 2001

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# Executive Summary

In June, 1993, Governor William Weld signed into law the Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA). MERA committed the state to increasing aid to local school districts, and also launched a process of comprehensive, standards-based reform. MERA was one of the earlier such state reforms.

At the time when MERA was passed, the Massachusetts Department of Education had a staff of 325 FTE's, down from approximately 1,000 in 1980. MERA greatly expanded the state's role in funding public education, specifying what students should learn, and holding educators accountable for students' achievement. Despite this increased state role, there have been few additional resources devoted to building the state's implementation capacity. For that reason, the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission decided to sponsor this study of the state's capacity to implement the far-reaching changes required by Education Reform.

**Methods.** Our research included analysis of documents related to Education Reform; in-depth interviews with 73 current and former state officials, association leaders, local educators, and other stakeholder representatives; and surveys mailed to district-level administrators, building-level administrators, and teachers.

**What is "Capacity?"** We evaluated the state's capacity to implement MERA by assessing three key areas: the state's *goals and responsibilities* under the law, the *resources and other organizational elements* available, and *stakeholders' perspectives* on goals, resources, and organizational elements.

**Which Elements of the State?** Our research concerned the entities within the state government whose activities affect K-12 education, with an emphasis on the Massachusetts Department of Education but also including the Board of Education, the legislature, the Governor's Office, and other agencies within the executive branch such as the Department of Revenue.

## Overall Capacity Issues

MERA greatly increased the state role both in funding public education and in guiding the local educational process. The state's role changed to incorporate setting of curriculum frameworks and holding schools accountable for student performance. In order to carry out its new roles, the state (primarily the Department of Education) had to use familiar policy instruments in new ways, and/or to a greater extent, than previously. Finally, because MERA was designed to be a systemic reform of education, all of the various state activities and policies needed to fit together into a coherent whole based on state educational standards. In order to produce systemic reform, state authorities would need both an enhanced ability to collect data and organizational structures and functions to facilitate its use.

Three sets of capacity issues cut across all of the different programmatic elements of MERA.

**Political Issues.** By "political issues," we mean issues related to the climate of opinion and assumptions within which state goals for MERA implementation have been set and local implementation has taken place. The important political issues for MERA implementation have been (1) the extent to which influential actors agree with the conception of MERA as a "bargain" between state and local authorities, (2) the appropriate extent of the state role, (3) the direction of leadership at the state level, and (4) local educators' response to the new state roles.

- When MERA was passed, many state leaders assumed that the state's role would primarily be to set standards and hold schools accountable for meeting them, to be fairly hands-off regarding how schools met the standards (the "tight-loose" assumption).

- Increasingly, this "tight-loose" approach is seen as insufficient. Many respondents argue that the state has a key technical assistance responsibility to help schools with the processes of implementing standards-based reform.

- Disagreement over DOE's appropriate role(s) has hampered DOE's ability to receive and strategically deploy the resources it needs.

- The change in Board of Education leadership in 1996 heightened controversy around Education Reform and reduced educators' willingness to cooperate with the state. This adversely affected DOE's capacity to leverage changes at the local level.

- Local educators see many of the functions included in MERA as appropriately shared between state and local authorities., In the area of assessment there may be resistance to an increased state role, and there is more interest in DOE brokering rather than providing professional development.

**Organizational Issues.** Even in the purest version of the "tight-loose" conception of MERA, the state still needs to have the capacity to produce and update curriculum frameworks, assess student performance, certify educators, and hold schools accountable for student performance. As mentioned above, there is significant interest in the state going beyond this minimum role to support schools and districts with technical assistance in implementing standards-based curriculum and instruction.

Many different entities within state government have had some role in MERA implementation. The Department of Education occupies a complicated place, in that it has had to answer to the Board of Education, the Governor (since it is an executive branch agency), a now-defunct Secretary of Education, and the legislature (which funds it), while at the same time needing to remain responsive to the Commonwealth's many schools and school districts.

- This organizational complexity has contributed to competing and fluctuating policy agendas for DOE and local educators.

- This organizational complexity has also prevented DOE from making the case to the legislature for additional administrative resources.

- Within DOE, communication among offices and coordination of efforts have been problematic. Staff see this as due to resource constraints, a resulting workload that leads to a program-specific focus by staff, and a need for more organization-wide management. Combined federal and state responsibilities complicate this.

- Some educators in the field perceive DOE as difficult to communicate with and to get information from.

**Financial and Human Resource Issues.** Limited funding and staff have posed major challenges for the implementation of MERA.

Outside of the Department of Education, relatively few state staff work on K-12 educational issues. For that reason, our analysis of financial and human resources for MERA implementation focuses primarily on DOE. MERA added significantly to DOE's responsibilities, but did not take any functions away from the Department. These increased responsibilities were to be carried out by a staff that had been greatly reduced over the previous decade. DOE staff increases were slow in coming: a net increase of only 13 FTE between 1993 and 1998, followed by an increase of 67 FTE between 1998 and 2001.

- About 45% of DOE staff are in positions paid with federal funds, which in most cases restricts the agency's ability to use them for implementing state programs. In addition, the overhead funds that come with these federal grant funds go not to DOE but to the state's General Fund.

- Over 95% of new state spending under MERA has been "passed through" DOE to local districts, with very little left over for building state-level administrative capacity or evaluating what works and does not work.

- The legislature has passed numerous other initiatives in addition to MERA. Administrative and evaluation funds are often lacking in these initiatives.

- Both inside and outside DOE, there is widespread belief that the agency does not have sufficient staff to implement MERA and its other responsibilities.

- Because the state pay scale is lower than what experienced educators can earn in schools and districts, it is difficult to recruit people with extensive experience, in schools or elsewhere, for jobs at DOE. DOE has responded to staffing needs through consultants and sabbatical teachers.

- Use of consultants and sabbatical teachers has almost certainly not closed the gap between the level of DOE's regular staff and the extent of its responsibilities.

- Accountability, data collection, research and evaluation, and school building assistance are areas in which the need for more state-level staff is particularly acute.

## Issues Specific to Components of Education Reform

At the beginning of our research process, we analyzed the Education Reform Act and identified ten categories of state-level activity. We then examined the capacity issues within each area.

**Developing and Implementing Standards of Learning.** This area has included the production of the Common Core of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks and other standards such as vocational standards, as well as supporting local districts' implementation of standards through alignment of curriculum and instruction.

- Standards-based reform involves both development and implementation components. Although this process has at times been politically contentious, it is administratively easier than helping districts implement the standards.

- The initial Common Core of Learning process demonstrates the power of a collaborative process to inspire cooperation in the field (which in turn expands the capacity of the state to foster standards-based reform). Subsequent estrangement of the field limits this important avenue for expanding state capacity.

- Because of the small numbers of staff involved, DOE's efforts to support implementation have not been extensive. Local educators would like more help.

**Developing and Implementing a System of Student Assessment.** The model of systemic reform enacted by MERA requires an assessment of what students have learned, to serve as an indicator of whether reform is succeeding.

- Like many other state education authorities, DOE has used a test contractor to build its capacity in this area.

- Even with test production contracted out, extensive responsibilities remain in DOE, for which current staff levels are barely sufficient.

- Local educators express dissatisfaction with the state's ability to help them interpret MCAS results.

**Developing an Accountability System for School and District Performance.**
Accountability is one of the most important components of MERA, and it is one of the
areas in which implementation to date has been most hindered by political,
organizational, and resource issues.

- Because of limited resources, the state accountability system emphasizes oversight of
  a few schools that appear to have the most egregious problems, rather than the
  Education Reform principle of continuous improvement for all schools in the
  Commonwealth.

- Competition and conflict between branches and offices of the state government has
  slowed implementation of an accountability system for schools and districts.

- The Department of Education lacks resources needed for broad-based technical
  assistance to schools and districts on school improvement.

**Supporting Local Education Governance and Management.** MERA included
significant changes in the way schools and districts are run. All schools are to have
School Councils. School Committees' power over personnel issues was reduced, with
superintendents and principals given more authority. DOE's role in these local changes
was to provide support for districts while also ensuring that the new laws were followed.

- Districts have less internal capacity for planning and governance than MERA
  assumed.

- School Councils and other governance and management reforms have been unevenly
  implemented.

- School committees would benefit from professional development on their role under
  MERA.

- The state's own limited capacity prevents it from supporting local capacity-building.

**Making Coherent State-Level Policy.** MERA required not only that the structures and
processes of the K-12 public education system change, but also that they change in a
systematic and coherent way consistent with standards-based reform. In order for state
authorities to play their role in coordinating local efforts, they must themselves act in a
coordinated way to guide and monitor education activities.

- State-level policymaking has been a contentious area, with competing agendas,
  fluctuating goals, and a gradual estrangement of the field.

- The policymaking structure has been in flux, with the Board of Education changing
  from 17 to 9 members, the Secretariat of Education being abolished, and the Board's
  Advisory Committees having an unclear role

- The state could improve interagency coordination and communication to further reform's effectiveness and coherence.

**Collecting and Using Information to Improve the Performance of the Educational System.** Coordination of policy making, accountability, and communication requires that the state collect appropriate information and use it in ways that contribute to system improvement.

- DOE has focused significant resources on technology and information systems, but the basic functions of knowing what schools students attend, what courses they take, and how they perform on assessments have not yet been implemented.

- MERA placed significant responsibility in this area with the Secretary of Education, which was abolished, and with DOE's then-division of Evaluation, Planning, and Research, which has been reorganized and receives few resources for this function.

- Other entities within state government, such as the Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities and the Education Reform Review Commission, do not have sufficient capacity for data collection.

**Enhancing Educator Quality and Education as a Profession.** The approach taken thus far to professional development in MERA exemplifies the "tight-loose" assumption about the state's role in reform. Local districts received state funds for professional development and were expected to use it in ways that supported reform.

- In practice, many districts have not known how to use the funds effectively, and the state has had insufficient resources to use in guiding them.

- DOE has had relatively little professional development resources of its own because most state funds for professional development go to local districts. DOE has begun building capacity in its Educator Quality cluster; several interviewees spoke highly about its initial progress.

- The field has seen accountability issues, including MCAS and teacher testing, taking precedence over professional development support.

**Ensuring Readiness to Learn Through Early Childhood Education Programs.** Between 1996 and 1999, spending on the early childhood education component of MERA increased by 247%.

- A report by the State Auditor concluded that monitoring and evaluation capacity did not keep pace with the spending increase.

- Survey and interview respondents expressed the opinion that early childhood education programs still need evaluation, improvement and expansion.

**Implementing Choice and Charter Schools.** MERA expanded interdistrict choice and authorized the state to approve charter schools.

- Although the charter school office staff is quite small, it has produced an accountability system that some people believe could provide guidance for a more general accountability system.

**Funding Public Education.** When MERA passed in 1993, many observers expressed doubt that the state would make good on its promise to spend $1.3 billion in new state funds on education over seven years.

- The funding promise was fulfilled, and all districts have now been brought up to the foundation level of education spending.

- The state has recognized that the definition of the foundation level must be revised to keep up with the challenge of standards-based reform.

## Recommendations

- **Increase the funds available for DOE operations, and use the increased funds to improve the agency's capacity in key areas.** DOE has particularly strong resource needs in the areas of data collection and management, research and evaluation, and assessment. Other important areas of need include staff for the school building assistance program and funds to be used as state matches for federal grants.

- **Ensure that legislatively mandated programs include adequate funds for DOE to administer and evaluate them.** In general, whenever state government creates a new grant program or imposes a new responsibility or reporting requirement on the DOE or local school districts, it should specify a source of funding for administrative support, including resources for facilitation, oversight, and evaluation of the program—perhaps 5% for administration and 3% for evaluation.

- **Allow overhead from DOE's Federal grants to go to DOE rather than the General Fund.** Other potential sources of funds include the revenues from educator certification fees, which also currently go to the General Fund rather than Department administrative costs.

- **Salaries for DOE staff should be increased, in order to attract greater numbers of experienced educators to work in the agency.** DOE is not able to match what experienced superintendents, principals, and teachers can earn in school districts. This is a difficult issue to resolve, given that the salary ranges for DOE are generally the same as for all state agencies. DOE has creatively used contracted employees, sabbatical teachers, and other mechanisms to address this shortcoming, but the capacity costs of these practices cannot be underestimated. Given the ambitious combination of support and regulatory roles required of DOE by MERA, an inability to hire sufficient numbers of experienced educators is a significant limitation.

- **Increase involvement of and communication with educators in the field in implementation of Education Reform.** DOE has already begun to take some initiative in this area. Overall, the relationship between state authorities and the field needs to become less adversarial. From the governor, the legislature, the Board, the Department, and the various education associations, there needs to be some sort of common attempt to say that Education Reform is a worthy goal, that we have much to celebrate, that we are going to get there, and that we will move forward together.

- **Where appropriate, use resources and organizations outside of DOE to expand state capacity.** In some areas where DOE lacks capacity, such as building assistance, auditing, professional development, and other types of technical assistance there is likely to be relevant expertise elsewhere, either through other state agencies or outside contractors. Using networks of outside providers would still require DOE to have adequate financial, human, and technological resources to develop and manage the networks and to monitor quality of service. It is also important to recognize the limitations of contracting out as a means of policy implementation.

- **Resolve uncertainty over responsibility for accountability, monitoring, and oversight.** In addition to establishing a clear sense of which roles will be played by the Governor's Office and which by the DOE, it is also necessary to determine how both entities' work fits with that of the State Auditor and the Education Reform Review Commission. In the area of district accountability, lessons may be learned by comparing the different accountability methods used to evaluate charter schools and regular public schools.

- **Maintain and enhance DOE's capacity to play a regulatory role.** Emphasis on DOE as a supporter or facilitator of improved teaching and learning must be seen as complementing rather than supplanting its role as the enforcer of federal and state regulations. Although networks outside the agency can assist in the support and facilitating functions and in service delivery, legal compliance remains DOE's legal responsibility as a state agency.

- **Expand the use of sampling in data collection and program evaluation.** Closely monitoring the activities of 371 districts and 1,874 schools is a daunting task. However, there may be numerous areas in which a sampling strategy can deliver representative data at lower capacity cost than collecting data from all districts and/or schools. Adequate data collection and analysis through a sampling strategy would probably still require additional DOE capacity, but less than would be required by a census approach.

- **Improve coordination and communication within DOE.** Many interviewees (inside and outside DOE) talked about their impression that the work of various DOE clusters and staff members is not well coordinated, both because there isn't a chief operating officer or staff member with similar knowledge of and authority over which cluster is doing which tasks and because communication among clusters is largely ad hoc. The Commissioner's recent reorganization addresses one of these issues by adding a chief operating officer to the organizational chart. This reorganization, and subsequent ones, may also make cross-cluster communication and collaborations more routine.

- **Consider regional or at least western and southeastern Massachusetts field offices.** At present, all of DOE, including the Program Quality Assurance staff, whose areas of responsibility are geographically defined, are based in Malden. There may be significant benefits to be gained, in terms of building better connections between DOE and local educators, from a more regional approach. Regionally based staff need not become disconnected from Malden, but could use information technology for internal and external communication and coordination.

- **Conduct additional research.** Areas of needed research include the following:
  - How are districts spending their MERA funds?
  - What would a data management system optimally look like, based on the data-use needs of both the Department and local educators?
  - What are the best practices in professional development now, and how could a provider network be organized to bring these practices into classrooms across the state?
  - Evaluation of early childhood programs and spending—what's the best use of state funds?
  - Is there a fiscal crisis coming, due to the large number of current school building projects, that will drain instructional resources in the future?

When MERA was passed in 1993, its proponents had a vision of a future in which all Massachusetts children would have equal educational opportunities and would be able to meet world-class academic standards. The path to that future has proved long and challenging. Several of the state policy makers we met with described Education Reform implementation as having recently reached "the hard part," or as passing through "adolescence." They remained hopeful, however, that the challenges of Education Reform can be surmounted. We hope that the analysis and recommendations presented in this paper will be used constructively to support the Commonwealth in meeting these challenges.
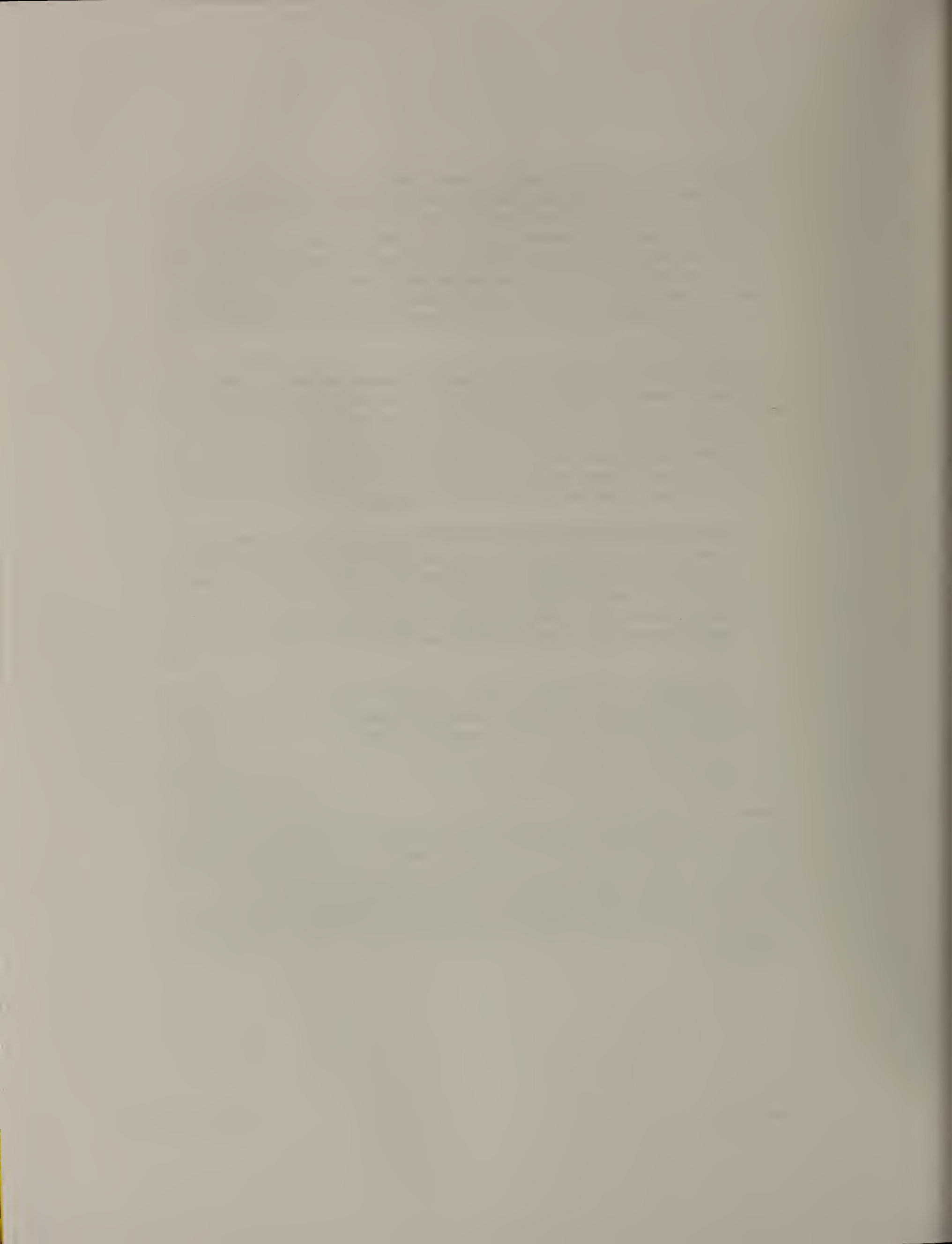
# I.    Introduction

In June, 1993, Governor William Weld signed into law the Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA). MERA committed the state to increasing aid to local school districts, and also launched a process of comprehensive, standards-based reform. Since the early 1990s, many other states have begun similar reform initiatives, but MERA was one of the first.

At the time when MERA was passed, the Massachusetts Department of Education had a staff of 325 FTE's, or only 33% as large as in 1980. Public education had been seen as a local matter, with only a small state role. MERA greatly expanded the state's role in funding public education, specifying what students should learn, and holding educators accountable for students' achievement. Despite this increased state role, there have been few additional resources devoted to building the state's implementation capacity. For that reason, the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission decided to sponsor this study of the state's capacity to implement the far-reaching changes required by Education Reform.

The remainder of this introductory section outlines the methods we used, our definition of "capacity," which parts of the state's education system we emphasized in our research, and which MERA-related functions we studied. In Part II, we identify ten key policy components of MERA and identify capacity-related implementation challenges common to all MERA policy areas. In Part III, we discuss capacity issues specific to each of ten primary tasks given to the state under MERA. In Part IV, we present recommendations for enhancing the state's capacity to implement MERA.

## Methodology

The first component of our research, *document analysis*, entailed collecting as many Education Reform-related reports and documents as we could obtain, from both state government and private-sector sources. A complete list of these documents follows the text of this report. In analyzing these documents, we paid particular attention to what we could learn about use of resources, lines of authority, and state and local understandings of MERA as it was being enacted and implemented.

Second, we carried out *interviews* with 73 current and former state officials, association leaders, local educators, and other stakeholder representatives, in March, April, and May 2001. All interviews but one were conducted in person. We used a common set of interview questions and topics to guide all interviews, but did not necessarily discuss the same issues in the same order with all interviewees. All interviewees were promised anonymity. Unless otherwise noted, information included in this report comes from the interviews. A list of interviewees is included in Appendix 5.

Third, our research included three *surveys* of local educators: superintendents, principals, and teachers. Survey questions addressed the fit between state and local goals under Education Reform, the relative importance of different Education Reform components, data sharing and communication with the Department of Education, and the appropriate balance between state and local roles in education policy.

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Principals, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers all supported the survey component of this project by urging their members to participate and by sharing mailing lists. For more information on our sampling strategy for the surveys, see the introductory section of Appendix 2.

Superintendents had a response rate of 41%, with 113 of 175 surveys returned. 565 surveys were sent to principals and 167 of them were returned in time for data analysis, resulting in a return rate of 30%. Teachers' response rate was much lower. We sent 616 surveys out and received 98 back, for a response rate of 16%. The full survey data analysis is included in Appendix 2 of this report.

Finally, we conducted an informal study of the staffing and organization of other programs with similar objectives to parts of Education Reform, as well as of comparisons of state education agencies. Our comparative analysis of programs in other jurisdictions was not a systematic search for best practices nationwide. Rather, it consisted of seeking out information on a few programs, selected because of our familiarity with them or because interviewees in Massachusetts mentioned them as important models. Discussion of these other programs appears in Appendix 1.

## What is "Capacity?"

In our research, we emphasized not the actual outcomes of Education Reform, but rather the resources, processes, organizational arrangements, and personnel that state authorities have used in pursuit of those outcomes. Our analysis is informed by the literature on "learning organizations," which emphasizes that organizational learning requires not just acquisition of information, but also building of a capacity to gather and organize data as well as to act effectively (Marquardt, 1996). We understand organizational capacity as a measure of an organization's or system's ability to use its resources and processes to achieve its goals (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Shaw, 1992). In the specific context of MERA, we evaluated whether the resources and organizational characteristics of Massachusetts state government, primarily but not only the Department of Education, have been sufficient to allow the state to implement the policies and carry out the roles implied or demanded by the law.

We organized our study around three key factors in assessing capacity:

• Goals and Responsibilities: In order to draw useful conclusions about the adequacy of organizational elements, it is necessary to understand the ends to which the organizational elements are means. The same organization or system might have adequate capacity to carry out some of its tasks and inadequate capacity for others.

• Organizational Elements: These include human, financial, and technological resources, as well as the structures and processes that support their use. One comparative study of state education

agencies implementing complex reform identified people, training, and infrastructure as the necessary components of capacity (Lusi, 1997). The important organizational elements are not only within individual agencies, but also in the relationships among state agencies and between agencies and the field (Massell, 1998a).

The organizational elements we examined included staff and funding levels of the Department of Education, division of labor among state agencies, communication between state and local authorities, and the collection and use of data.

• Perspectives: An important means of understanding capacity is analysis of stakeholders' and participants' perspectives on whether goals have been met and organizational elements are sufficient. It is also important to learn whether actors at different levels of the system have the same or different perspectives on policies, as sharp differences of perspective will impede implementation.

## Who Is "The State?"

In the United States, local and state-level authorities have historically shared the responsibility for public education. The broadest possible definition of "the state education system" would include all of these state and local authorities, including public higher education institutions. We did not use such a broad definition in this research. Instead, we focused on the capacity and activities of entities within the state government whose activities affect K-12 education, with an emphasis on the Massachusetts Department of Education but also including the Board of Education, the legislature, the Governor's Office, and other agencies within the executive branch such as the Department of Revenue.

## Capacity to Do What?

As in the other New England states, control over and responsibility for funding K-12 education in Massachusetts has historically rested with local authorities. MERA greatly increased the state role both in funding public education and in guiding the local educational process, including curriculum, student assessment, and evaluation of school performance.

Some of the most significant changes to the state role were a commitment to use state funds to bring all districts in the state up to a foundation level of per-pupil spending by 2000, recertification of educators every five years rather than lifetime certification, publication of more uniform information about schools and districts, funding and managing a charter schools program, establishment of statewide educational goals and standards, increased instructional time, a requirement that students pass an examination based on the state standards before graduating from high school, and statewide Certificates of Mastery and of Occupational Proficiency. State authorities were also involved in implementation of changes in the roles of actors at the local level, such as superintendents, principals, School Committees, and the newly created School Councils.

Drawing on the Center for Education Policy's previous work in producing a conceptual map of MERA, we divided the many tasks the Act required of the state government into ten key

categories: 1) developing and implementing *standards* of learning; 2) developing and administering a system of *student assessment*; 3) developing an *accountability system* for school and district performance; 4) supporting and changing *local governance and management* of public education; 5) making effective *state level policy decisions*; 6) *collecting and using information* to inform policy decisions and improve the performance of the state's educational system ; 7) *enhancing educator quality* and education as a profession through new processes for certification and professional development; 8) ensuring *readiness to learn* through early childhood and literacy programs; 9) *encouraging school choice and charter schools*; and 10) allocating *funding* in a way that is adequate and equitable, both within and across districts.

In Part III of the report, we will return in detail to these ten categories of tasks. In Part II, we will examine several capacity-related challenges that have been common to all ten areas.

## II.   Overall Issues in State Capacity

In carrying out their new duties under MERA, the Department of Education (DOE) and other state agencies have employed a wide range of policy instruments, including the following:

- State Curriculum Frameworks
- State Financial Aid to School Districts
- The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)
- Audits
- Assistance to Underperforming Schools
- Certification and Recertification Requirements
- Professional Development
- Regulations
- Guidelines
- Competitive Grants
- Contracts
- Reporting Requirements for Schools and Districts

Although the state's MERA responsibilities were new, many of these policy instruments were not.  For example, prior to MERA the state already had a standardized assessment, the MEAP. The Department of Education had administered competitive grants and contracts before, and had worked with professional development providers.

MERA wrought three major kinds of changes in the state's use of these policy instruments. First, the state's role changed to incorporate setting of curriculum frameworks and holding schools accountable for student performance.  Second, under MERA the state (primarily the Department of Education) had to use familiar policy instruments in new ways, and/or to a greater extent, than previously.  Where the MEAP, for example, had produced school-level scores, the MCAS produces scores for individual students that reflect their mastery of the state curriculum frameworks, which are also used to identify under-performing schools.  Or, in the field of accountability, DOE had for years had a Program Quality Assurance unit monitoring district compliance with federal and state regulations.  Under MERA, state authorities would examine not only legal compliance, but also the extent to which school personnel were able to work effectively with students.

Finally, because MERA was designed to be a systemic reform of education, all of the various state activities and policies needed to fit together into a coherent whole based on state educational standards.  Data, in particular student assessment results, would drive systemic improvement.  In order to produce systemic reform, state authorities would need both an enhanced ability to collect data and organizational structures and functions to facilitate its use.

Three major sets of issues—political, resource-related, and organizational—have complicated the state's efforts to expand its role in education policy in a systematic way.

## Political Issues

By "political issues," we mean issues related to the climate of opinion and assumptions within which state goals for MERA implementation have been set and local implementation has taken place.

According to state-level leaders we interviewed, a confluence of three factors led to the legislature's passage of MERA in 1993. First, local educational authorities' budgets had been cut dramatically during the 1980s as a result of Proposition 2½ limits on local taxation. The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) wanted the state to increase its aid to districts as way of making up for the revenue shortfalls. Second, inequities in the financial resources available to property-rich and property-poor districts had inspired a lawsuit, *McDuffy v. Robertson*, which many policy makers expected the state to lose. They wanted to enact financial reform before the court acted, rather than wait for a court-ordered solution. Finally, business leaders had become highly critical of the public schools' performance and organization. The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) issued a report in 1991 entitled "Every Child a Winner," whose recommendations the legislature used as a guide in drafting MERA. MASS joined with MBAE in supporting the bill, but some of the other education associations opposed it because of the changes it made to teachers' and principals' certification and job security.

The important political issues for MERA implementation have been the extent to which influential actors agree with the conception of MERA as a "bargain" between state and local authorities, the extent to which DOE's role should be a regulatory one, the direction of leadership at the state level, and local educators' response to the new state roles.

### MERA as a "Bargain" of Resources for Accountability

Some have characterized the model of state-local relations underlying MERA as a "bargain," in which the state gave districts more money and a reduced regulatory burden in exchange for accountability for student performance on state assessments. Another way of describing the model is "tight-loose": the state is "tight" in its identification of goals, but "loose" in regulating what schools and districts do to achieve those goals. The tight-loose model assumes that local districts have the capacity to make and implement effective decisions in response to accountability pressure from the state.

The alternative to the "tight-loose" state-local relationship is one in which the state takes a much more hands-on role in local districts. In this vision, the state would not stop at monitoring student performance on standardized tests. It would also regulate how districts spent MERA funds, punish them for deviating from regulations, and specify how districts should address the curriculum frameworks.

This gap in perceptions matters because the two different understandings of the state's role in MERA lead to different conceptions of what the state ought to be doing and how much capacity it needs to carry out its responsibilities. If the role of the state is only to set standards and to get out of the districts' way while they work to meet them, there is less of a case to be made for

expanded state capacity than if the state is seen as needing to be closely involved with local implementation of curriculum frameworks and other elements of Education Reform.

Few in Massachusetts hold to the strictest version of either the tight-loose or interventionist state models, and in a sense the dichotomy is a false one. Even the "tight-loose" model requires sufficient state capacity to manage a statewide assessment and apply sanctions to underperforming schools. However, the point remains that different understandings of how large the state role was supposed to be under MERA lead to different senses of how much implementation capacity the state needs. Based on our interviews, what looks to some people like a "tight-loose" partnership between state and local education authorities feels to some local educators like the state has imposed mandates on them without providing any assistance with how to respond. In a sense, this local perception parallels many DOE employees' belief that MERA gave them more responsibility without a commensurate increase in resources.

Over the course of MERA implementation, some policy makers have come to question the assumptions behind the "tight-loose" understanding of Education Reform. Specifically, they now believe that not all local school districts have the capacity to decide how to bring all students' achievement up to high standards. As one interviewee put it:

> *The schools are overwhelmed with all they have to do. Don't assume they know best how to do Ed Reform in their schools. There's very little planning, or analysis of what's working. Schools need help—time to plan, resources to evaluate, change what they're doing. [There are] schools that are underperforming, have had audits done—I don't know what happens after that. There aren't the kind of support systems that need to happen for underperforming schools—more resources, experts to help schools work through problems—schools are trying to do figure it out on their own and running in a lot of directions.*

Some districts and local educators have also expressed a need for more direction from the state. In a way, this is beginning to happen, as the legislature has made some education funding more categorical in nature than had previously been the case. To the extent that the state takes a larger role in directing local activities, more state capacity will be needed to ensure that this direction is of high quality.

## Regulation, Support, or Partnership?

According to many of our interviewees, the most important question to be answered about the state's role in MERA implementation is whether the Department of Education should emphasize regulation or support and technical assistance in its relations with local districts. As one person put it, DOE is both a "cop" and a "social worker." In addition to asking which functions DOE should emphasize, it is also necessary to ask whether, and with what other entities, DOE should share both kinds of function. If DOE is not the only "cop" or "social worker" in the education system, then how should those roles be shared, and what resources are necessary? This issue is not unique to Massachusetts. Research in other states suggests that the role of regulation in standards-based school reform has frequently been problematic (Elmore, Abelmann, and Fuhrman, 1996, pp. 90-91).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, many educators in the field believed that DOE was excessively regulatory. Through the 1990s, key figures in the leadership of DOE tried to move away from that role. However, some of our interviewees still think DOE does too much monitoring and regulating, as opposed to supporting local change efforts in more positive ways. Particularly in the last few years, the push toward more accountability has shifted DOE out of a support role in the eyes of many local educators. Even within the Department, interviewees mentioned what they called a "natural progression" from reform elements in which DOE acted as a partner with the field, such as designing the Common Core of Learning and the Curriculum Frameworks, to functions such as assessment and accountability that put DOE into a more regulatory role. Determining the architecture of reform, while not an easy task, creates less political conflict than does assessing its strength.

Others believe that DOE does not do enough monitoring and regulating in specific policy areas that contribute to major priorities of Education Reform. For example, the Department does not have comprehensive information on how districts have spent the extra funds they received through MERA. In particular, many districts have failed to spend the state aid they have received for professional development. Coming at a time when educators face the unprecedented challenge of high standards for all students, the shortfall threatens the success of the reform (see Massachusetts Teachers' Association, 2000; also Education Management and Accountability Board, 2000). School Councils, another key component of Education Reform, have been implemented only "on paper" in many districts, and have not taken on the strong role envisioned for them in MERA. Where a given individual stands on the issue of DOE's appropriate regulatory role influences how much capacity she or he believes the state needs in order to implement MERA. However, even in the most minimal conception of the state's role, it still must have capacity to enforce regulations and monitor policy implementation.

Lack of staffing (which will be discussed in more detail below) has been a major reason for DOE's inability to regulate and monitor. The lack of staff increases for DOE following passage of MERA, which many people agree produced a major capacity problem (see below), was in part due to a particular understanding of the agency's appropriate regulatory role. In the mid-1990s, key leaders in the executive branch (including DOE leadership) believed that a larger agency would be a more regulatory one, and that a more regulatory agency would be a bad thing. Thus, they did not seek additional resources for DOE. However, constraining DOE's regulatory capacity by limiting its staffing also constrains its ability to support local MERA implementation.

Some view MERA implementation as taking place in a "distributed system," with responsibility and authority shared broadly between state and local authorities. Under the leadership of Martin Kaplan, who was Chair when MERA passed, the Massachusetts Board of Education was committed to participation and involvement of the field. Several of our interviewees described the Kaplan board's process for creation of the Common Core of Learning as a model of building shared capacity. Over a nine-month period, the 40-member Commission on the Common Core of Learning involved approximately 50,000 people in hearings and meetings around the state.

Literature on policy implementation in general, and education policy implementation in particular, emphasizes the need for participation and mutual adjustment between policy makers

and policy implementers. Administrators and teachers have a great deal of autonomy; in such a "loosely coupled" system (Weick 1976), it is difficult if not impossible to force them to comply with top-down policies. Because coercion is ineffective in educational institutions, several recent studies of systemic reform in education have highlighted the need to include teachers' disposition towards change in implementation strategies (Goertz, Floden, and O'Day 1996) and to treat local administrators in ways that predispose them to act as allies rather than impediments to reform (Massell, Kirst, and Hoppe 1997). As Lusi (1997) points out, persuasion and joint learning by state and local officials should be considered as policy instruments for complex, state-led reform (170).

Although the Common Core was not mandated by MERA, it was intended as a starting point for deliberation on the required Curriculum Frameworks. When Governor Weld replaced Kaplan with John Silber as Chair of the Board of Education, the process became much less collaborative. Silber had been appointed, in part, because Weld believed Education Reform implementation was not moving fast enough. Broad participation was seen as having produced much of the delay. Under Silber, state authorities rejected the original frameworks for being insufficiently rigorous, too laden with educational jargon, and not specific enough to measure with a standardized assessment. Ironically, the controversies over these changes introduced still more delay to MERA implementation. Since they were first completed, the Curriculum Frameworks have been revised several times through a much less participatory process, and DOE no longer distributes the Common Core of Learning to districts.

According to some of our interviewees, these changes in the Frameworks deprived state authorities of locally based capacity to implement (in other words, deprived the state of the power of a distributed system). The initial participatory process had built a cohort of educators who were excited about the Frameworks and looking forward to implementing them in their classrooms. After the abrupt changes, these educators felt betrayed and viewed the Frameworks as an unwelcome state mandate. As a result of the shift in policy and reduction of input from the field, many educators have come to believe that the state's goals for MERA have been unstable and subject to capricious change.

## Leadership

The theme of shifts in leadership emerged numerous times in our interviews. Many interviewees (especially those outside state government) see Education Reform as having changed course in 1996. From 1993 to 1996, Board Chair Martin Kaplan promoted collaboration between state education authorities and the field. In 1996, John Silber replaced Martin Kaplan as Chair of the Board of Education and the Board's membership was reduced from 17 to 9. The new appointees included several people known to be critics of the public schools or affiliated with the Pioneer Institute, a Boston research organization that had advocated school privatization. Relations between the state and the field became much more conflictual.

Silber's term as Board Chair also contrasts with the situation since 1999, with David Driscoll as Commissioner of Education and James Peyser as Board Chair. Since this second major change in leadership, the Board and the Department have begun rebuilding connections between the state and the field and undoing some of the damage done to local educators' faith in the state by

Silber's public statements and policy decisions. However, our research indicates that there is still much work to be done in the area of rebuilding relations with the field.

The Board of Education is the main source of change in state leadership of Education Reform. Outside the Board, there has been continuity in most of the other leadership positions. Most of the legislative leaders responsible for passing MERA have moved on, but the legislature remains solidly in Democratic control. There have been three different governors or acting governors since 1993, but relative continuity in administrations. Current Governor Jane Swift was Lieutenant Governor under her predecessor, Paul Cellucci, who in turn had previously been Lieutenant Governor under William Weld, who signed the Education Reform Act as Governor.

Even had there been total stability in leadership, educators and the public might still perceive a shift in the priorities of Education Reform in the late 1990s when the implementation process reached what several of our interviewees called the "hard parts:" assessment and accountability. Although there have certainly been important changes in leadership of the Board of Education, the importance of stability in other areas—especially maintenance of the legislature's commitment to increased state funding for public education—should not be underestimated.

At least since the beginning of the last century, education reformers have wanted to keep politics out of the schools. In an era of comprehensive reform led by state elected and appointed officials, which challenges long-held assumptions about local control of education, political influence on policy implementation is inevitable. Disagreement over the state-local division of power, the extent to which DOE's role should be regulatory, and the overall direction and goals of Education Reform have affected both the state's implementation capacity and the difficulty of the tasks confronting the state.


## Local Educators' Views of State and Local Responsibilities

Despite controversy over Education Reform, local educators in our survey generally accepted the idea of sharing responsibility for MERA-related tasks with state authorities.

**Table 1** – *The Education Reform Act of 1993 assigned many new education-related tasks to the state government. For each category of tasks in the following table, please indicate whether you believe these tasks should be primarily a state responsibility, primarily a local responsibility, or a shared responsibility.\**

| Task | Primarily State Responsibility | Shared Responsibility | Primarily Local Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Developing and implementing curriculum standards | 12.1 | 76.1 | 11.5 |
| Developing and administering a student assessment system | 10.7 | 72.8 | 16.3 |
| Developing an accountability system for school and district performance | 14.6 | 72.5 | 12.6 |
| Supporting local governance and management of education reform | 14.2 | 63.2 | 19.7 |
| Developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel | 14.8 | 52.6 | 31.8 |
| Providing and/or guiding professional development | 2.3 | 58.6 | 38.5 |
| Allocating funding in a way that is adequate and equitable | 42.6 | 47.2 | 9.7 |
| Facilitating inter-district choice | 19.7 | 27.9 | 37.1 |
| Supervising charter schools | 58.5 | 22.2 | 8.5 |
| Ensuring readiness to learn through early childhood and literacy programs | 11.0 | 70.9 | 15.8 |
| Making state-level policy and planning decisions in coordination with key actors | 31.6 | 62.6 | 1.4 |
| Collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system | 30.4 | 65.6 | 2.8 |

\* "Don't know" responses are omitted.

Of the twelve tasks presented in the survey, at least a plurality of local educators said that ten should be shared state-local responsibilities. A majority viewed supervision of charter schools as a state responsibility, and a plurality said that facilitating inter-district choice should be primarily a local responsibility. Although a plurality believed that responsibility for equitable and adequate allocation of funding should be shared, almost as large a proportion of respondents identified it as primarily a state responsibility.

Nearly three-quarters of our respondents said that curriculum standards and school accountability should be shared state and local responsibilities. Of respondents who did not prefer a shared responsibility in these areas, slightly more said they ought to be primarily state responsibilities than said they ought to be primarily local responsibilities.

As in curriculum standards and school accountability, about three-quarters of the respondents expressed the belief that responsibility for student assessment should be shared between state and local authorities. However, people who saw assessment as primarily either a state or local responsibility were likelier to see it as primarily local rather than primarily state. This is the opposite of the responses for curriculum standards and school accountability.

These survey findings are important because they suggest that although local educators see many of the functions included in MERA as appropriately shared between state and local authorities, in a few key areas such as professional development and assessment there may be resistance to an increased state role. Such resistance makes the "tight-loose" model of MERA implementation

less likely to work because of its reliance on local initiative to respond to the challenge of standards-based education.

## Organizational Issues

MERA assigned several crucial new roles to the Massachusetts state government, in particular the Department of Education. Even in the purest version of the "tight-loose" conception of MERA, the state still needs to have the capacity to produce and update curriculum frameworks, assess student performance, certify educators, and hold schools accountable for student performance. Going beyond this minimum role, the state arguably must also support schools and districts with technical assistance and professional development.

Implementation of MERA has involved many organizational entities within the executive and legislative branches of state government. The Department of Education is the agency with responsibility for the majority of MERA implementation activities, in addition to its other work managing a variety of separate initiatives of the federal government and the state legislature, such as special education, bilingual education, school nutrition, and a host of others.

The Department receives policy directives regarding MERA activities from three different state sources—the Board of Education, the Governor, the Governor's education staff, and the legislature—as well as responding to media stories and the demands of its local educator constituencies. Although the existence of the Board of Education makes it appear that DOE is a quasi-independent agency, it is in fact part of the executive branch, which the Governor heads. DOE's leaders must publicly support policy decisions made by the Governor and cannot make independent appeals to the legislature for increased funding or other resources.

The Board of Education has played a very strong role in MERA decisionmaking, with hands-on involvement in areas including curriculum frameworks, MCAS, underperforming schools, educator licensure, and approval of charter schools. The Board is a lay board of 9 individuals (reduced from 17 in 1996) appointed by the governor for 5-year terms, with one dedicated staff person, based in the Department. This person's primary responsibilities are preparation of meeting materials and keeping the Board agenda.

The Governor's Office has an education advisor and a deputy education advisor (and until recently, the Lieutenant Governor), who have conducted policy research, given policy directives to the Department, and worked to influence the Board's activity. As of this year, the Governor's Office is also the new locus of the state's school and district accountability activities. In January, 2001, former Governor Cellucci signed a law creating an independent Office of Educational Quality and Accountability with a $3.9 million budget and a 5-member oversight board. The oversight board is now headed by James Peyser, who is also Chair of the Board of Education and the education advisor to Governor Jane Swift (Miller, 2001). It is possible that the shift of accountability into the Governor's Office and the triple role being played by Peyser signal a shift in power towards the Governor's Office and away from the Board of Education.

Proponents of the independent accountability office believe that it is necessary to separate technical assistance and regulatory functions in this area. They also believe that more objective

evaluation of schools' performance will come from outside the Department of Education. Opponents of shifting accountability out of DOE argue that the Department had developed a workable accountability model and was building internal capacity to use it, and that the shift merely added a layer of bureaucracy and set the scene for intragovernmental competition.

The Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services has also played a role in MERA accountability. In 1997, then-governor Weld issued Executive Order 393, which created the Education Management Accountability Board and charged the DOR's Division of Local Services to provide a team of auditors to that effort. An Audit Bureau was set up, which now numbers 14 FTE and has issued fiscal and operational audit reports on 23 local districts (6 in partnership with DOE accountability staff) under the Education Management Accountability Board (EMAB). Because of the creation of the new accountability council in the Governor's Office, EMAB is no longer in operation.

The Massachusetts legislature plays a policy and finance role in the implementation of MERA. The legislative committee with jurisdiction on these issues is the Joint Committee on Education, Arts & Humanities, with a staff of 3. Its impact on implementation has included continued appropriation of MERA's school finance formula and its moving of funding for MERA's accountability function from the Department of Education to the governor's office. Within the past year, the legislature also has taken the initiative in appointing a new Foundation Budget Review Commission. This Commission, required by MERA, has the responsibility for continual review of the adequacy of the state's foundation budget. Governor Weld appointed the first Commission, within the executive branch, but allowed its members' terms to expire without appointing new members. The new version of the Foundation Budget Review Commission is within the legislative branch, co-chaired by the House and Senate chairs of the Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission (MERRC) was established by MERA and charged with monitoring the extent to which MERA implementation has occurred and has "brought about education reform in the Commonwealth." It has a diverse membership, including the chairs of the Joint Committee on Education, Arts & Humanities, representatives of various education groups, higher education, parents, and others. MERRC has a mandate to conduct research on MERA's implementation, but it did not receive funding for this purpose until FY 1997 and its funding levels remain very low: $300,000 total budget for FY 2002.

A final state player in the implementation of MERA is the Board of Higher Education, which sets policies for state colleges and universities affecting teacher education, professional development, school partnerships, and entrance requirements for incoming college students. The Commissioner of Higher Education is an ex-officio member of the state's K-12 Board of Education.

## Organization of the Department of Education

The Department of Education itself has been the most important organization in MERA implementation. Its roles have included producing the curriculum frameworks, managing the contractors who produced the MCAS and the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests,

administering new educator certification programs and regulations, providing technical assistance to schools and districts, and, until this year, preparing to hold schools and districts accountable for students' MCAS performance.

Over the past thirty years, the Department of Education's structure has changed in two key ways. First, the size of its staff has decreased dramatically (see below for details), but at the same time it has had an increasing number of staff at or above the Associate Commissioner level. Second, prior to 1991 it had Regional Centers, but now all of its staff are based in Malden.

DOE has been reorganized numerous times, and a full analysis of the changes is beyond the scope of this study. However, we obtained organizational charts from 1970, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, and 2000 for comparison with the agency's structure in 2001 (prior to the most recent reorganization announced in May). Several of the areas in which DOE's capacity has recently been questioned (in particular, research, evaluation, and data collection—described below) are ones that seem to have lost priority on the organizational charts either before or shortly after passage of MERA.

In 1970, the Department's senior staff consisted of the Commissioner, one Deputy Commissioner, two Associate Commissioners (for Administration and Personnel, and for Curriculum and Instruction), and four Assistant Commissioners (for Research and Development, School Facilities and Related Services, Occupational Education, and State and Federal Assistance). Each of the Associate and Assistant Commissioners headed a Division. The Regional Centers were part of the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. By 1988, there were still six Divisions, but with a mostly different lineup of responsibilities: Educational Personnel, Finance and Administration, Occupational Education, School Programs, School Services, and Special Education. There were also six offices reporting to the Commissioner: the Adult Education Bureau, the Community Education Office, the Educational Equity Office, the General Counsel's Office, the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Office, and the External Affairs Office. The Regional Centers reported directly to the Deputy Commissioner. The Curriculum Service Bureau was part of the School Programs Division.

Budget cuts hit DOE hard in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Regional Centers were eliminated over a three-year period, with the last one closed down in 1991. On the 1991 DOE organizational chart, two divisions (Finance and Administration and School Services) carry the notation "due to reductions in appropriations units have been inoperable and their function assumed by other offices." The two inoperable divisions included some of the functions that would later be problematic in MERA implementation, such as data collection and school audit services. One interviewee described the cuts as follows:

> *Those regional centers, when you see what they could do with Ed Reform, that was where the practitioners went. They went to the regional branch when they had questions about implementation, whatever, professional development, they went to the specialists in the regions. And those regions are gone. For example, we have a problem in Pittsfield, the nearest help is Boston., So that has to have an impact in terms of being able to provide technical assistance in professional development, in accountability, in realigning the*

*curriculum. . . . And then you get this huge law, and the administration would never ask for additional staff.*

According to the DOE's 1993 MERA Implementation Plan, the Department was to be reorganized along the lines of its new duties. A schematic diagram in the Plan (p. 21) shows four overlapping circles labeled "Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner," "Education Improvement," "Evaluation, Planning, and Research," and "Administration and Program Support." However, in the 1994 Table of Organization, the Evaluation, Planning, and Research area is no longer on the same level as Education Improvement and Administration and Program Support, each of which had an Associate Commissioner. Instead, the third Associate Commissioner is in charge of Finance and Accountability. Under that person, there is an Accountability and Evaluation Services area, but the planning and research functions are not clearly placed on the chart. On the 1998 "Revised Organizational Chart," there are only two Associate Commissioners, for Program Accountability and Curriculum Standards. Most of the internal support functions such as human resources and financial management were in the charge of three other senior staff, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief of Staff, and the Chief Technology Officer.

The trend toward fewer Associate Commissioners reversed between 1998 and 2000. The June 13, 2000 Organizational Chart shows two Deputy Commissioners (for Administration and Policy and for Academic Affairs), a Senior Associate Commissioner who is also the General Counsel, a Chief Technology Officer, a Chief Financial Officer, and eight other staff at the Associate Commissioner level, in charge of Accountability, Education Program Services, Educator Quality, School Readiness, Student Assessment Programs, School to Career, Charter Schools, and Mathematics, Science, and Technology/Engineering. This basic structure is the one that was in place in May, 2001 when Commissioner Driscoll announced the newest reorganization.

MERA assumes that state education authorities will provide comprehensive, systematic guidance and monitoring of local reform efforts. However, some characteristics of DOE's organization (apart from its low staffing levels) seem to impede its ability to play such a role. In our interviews, several people noted that DOE lacks an "operational ombudsman" with a broad sense of how all the ongoing projects relate to each other and final authority over which offices should perform which tasks. This used to be the Deputy Commissioner's role, but was lost when then-Deputy Commissioner Driscoll moved into the top position and the two new Deputy positions were created. The newly announced organizational structure responds to this problem by adding a Chief Operating Officer.

The other DOE organizational issue that frequently came up in interviews was the lack of an institutionalized way of sharing information across related projects. One senior staff member commented that there are no incentives for sharing information among colleagues, so many people allow it to become a low priority. Educators in the field complained of often getting different answers to questions from different parts of DOE, also indicating a lack of communication. The changes to DOE's structure over the years have made it a "flatter" organization, at least on paper, but it may also have simply increased the degree of compartmentalization among staff who report to different Associate Commissioners. As one interviewee put it,

*There's a great deal of Balkanization within the Department. There is poor communication among people who are working on different things that could be complementary. Somehow, and it's sort of a recurring problem, somehow there needs to be leadership at the Department and structures that create a much more open and collaborative way of looking at issues so that, for example, if we have an issue about how are kids going to pass math, we have to really be able to say, 'OK, what's curriculum and instruction doing about that? What's PALMS doing about that? What's Special Ed doing about that? What's Lunch Programs doing about that?' If that's our priority. So I think, and "What's School & District Accountability doing about that? And by the way, who are you using to get advice to schools and districts about what they should be doing in their math program?" Helping to connect into this vast network of professional development providers that we've been building up.*

Because Kentucky's education reform act was a model for MERA, the organization of its Department of Education provides an interesting point of comparison. See Appendix 1 for details.

## Decisionmaking Processes

Within DOE, according to our interviewees there, major decisions about priorities are set by the Board of Education and by the Commissioner in meetings with senior staff members. In interviews, DOE senior staff tended to describe how their work priorities are set in terms of the hierarchy—that they receive priorities from the Board of Education, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners, or others above them in the formal organization. However, several people also said that the Commissioner does a good job of getting information from within the organization and consulting with staff members below the senior level when it is appropriate to do so.

Competition to set an agenda for education and pressure on DOE, both from the legislature and from elsewhere in the executive branch, have undermined the cohesiveness of MERA implementation. Because DOE is part of the executive branch of state government, its work is affected by gubernatorial priorities. For example, in several of our interviews we discussed whether or not DOE had ever made a case to the legislature for funding of more staff and administrative capacity to implement Education Reform. People knowledgeable about the direction of DOE leadership at the time said that it had not, because of the commitment to reduced regulation discussed earlier. However, others said that even if DOE's leaders had wanted more capacity, they would not have been free to make this case to legislators because expansion of state bureaucracy was contrary to the priorities of the Weld and Cellucci administrations. Without a specific request from the executive branch, the legislature would not have increased DOE's budget on its own because doing so would make Democratic legislative leaders look like big spenders in contrast to the fiscal conservatives in the Governor's Office. Until 1996, DOE also competed for scarce resources with the Executive Office for Educational Affairs.

Increasing the state role in educational standard setting, assessment, and accountability has made education a more visible policy issue for elected officials such as the Governor and the members of the legislature, which has complicated agenda-setting and decision-making. With more people and agencies trying to participate, the possibilities for conflict among state-level actors have increased. This has been most apparent in the area of accountability, where there has been tension within the executive branch (i.e. between the Governor's Office and the Department of Education) over which entity should have which responsibilities.

Intervention in education policy by the Governor and the legislature has sometimes produced instability in policy goals. A recent example is the outside provisions to the budget resolution passed in 2000, which DOE staff see as having imposed gubernatorial priorities, such as the competency testing of mathematics teachers in schools with low MCAS scores, on them. The legislature also responds to constituents' pressure to "do something" about various education issues. As a result of various legislative initiatives, local districts now have fifteen different mandated reporting requirements. Interviewees at DOE were also concerned about the lack of communication between the department and the rest of the executive branch and between the department and the legislature.

In addition to outright conflict, lack of clarity over roles has sometimes been a problem. The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education's 1995 report on implementation of MERA reports that confusion about the respective roles of the Department of Education, the Board of Education, the Executive Office of Educational Affairs, the Office of Management and Information Systems, MCET, the Higher Education Coordinating Council, and private vendors was slowing the implementation of MERA. Failure to coordinate weakens the comprehensive, integrated intent of the reforms.

## Flow of Information From DOE to the Field

In either the "tight-loose" or more interventionist vision of the state's role in Education Reform, it is crucial that DOE communicate effectively with local educators. The formal and informal channels through which this communication takes place are thus a crucial organizational element. In this section, we emphasize communication from DOE to educators in the field; in the section of Part III on collection and use of data, we will also address the flow of information in the other direction, from the field to DOE.

Our survey of local educators included several questions that explored how they get information about Education Reform, in general, and from DOE in particular. The major source of Education Reform information is DOE itself:

**Table 2** – Summary of Responses Regarding Sources of Information About Education Reform
(Respondents were asked to give more than one response if they use more than one source of information.)

| How do you get information about Education Reform? | Sup. | Prin. | Teach. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Documents mailed directly to me by the Department of Education | 96.4% | 98.2% | 53.8% |
| The Department of Education web site | 88.4% | 70.9% | 37.2% |
| The media | 55.4% | 49.7% | 73.1% |
| Via a union or professional association | 54.5% | 46.7% | 75.6% |
| Documents mailed by the Department of Education to districts and distributed in schools | NA | 74.5% | 74.4% |
| Documents mailed directly to me by other state agencies or offices | 44.6% | 26.7% | 14.1% |

Several differences among superintendents', principals', and teachers' responses bear noting. Superintendents were more likely to get documents from state agencies or offices other than DOE and were more likely to get information from the Department of Education's web site than were either principals or teachers. Teachers were less likely than either group of administrators to get information directly from the Department of Education or from the Department's web site. However, teachers were more likely to use the media, union and professional associations, and documents passed on at the local level from the state as sources of information than were superintendents and principals. This difference matters, since it implies that DOE's communications with teachers are less direct than with other groups of educators. Whether this indirect communication is a cause or an effect of teachers' seemingly lower opinion of DOE and Education Reform is a question worth addressing in further research.

We also asked superintendents and principals how frequently they contact DOE:

**Table 3** – Summary of Responses Regarding Frequency of Contact With DOE

| How frequently do you contact the Department of Education? | Sup. | Prin. |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 0.0% | 6.1% |
| Once Per Year | 0.9% | 11.0% |
| Several Times Per Year | 37.8% | 73.8% |
| Once Per Month | 28.8% | 6.1% |
| Once Per Week | 22.5% | 2.4% |
| More Than Once Per Week | 5.4% | 0.0% |

This question was not asked of teachers. Superintendents were significantly more likely to contact DOE than were principals. Interestingly (see below), superintendents also tend to see DOE staff in a more positive light than do principals, which again suggests that there is a link between frequency of contact with DOE and positive opinions about DOE and its activities.

We also asked respondents how they most frequently contact DOE. Administrators are likelier than teachers to contact DOE and to rely on existing contacts at the agency:

**Table 4–** Summary of Responses Indicating How Respondents Most Frequently Contact the Department of Education
(Some respondents chose more than one response.)

| How do you (or your staff) most frequently contact someone at the Department of Education? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Teachs. | Admins. | All |
| I directly contact a specific department or program area | 19.5% | 55.2% | 47.5% |
| I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I call him/her | 18.2% | 40.1% | 35.3% |
| I directly contact someone I already know | 6.5% | 41.9% | 34.2% |
| I use the switchboard operator to direct me to the appropriate contact person | 29.9% | 23.5% | 24.9% |
| I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I send him/her an email message | 18.2% | 40.1% | 18.1% |
| I do not contact the Department of Education | 44.2% | 7.2% | 15.3% |

As DOE prepares to move many of its information gathering and distribution functions online, it should also take note of teachers' current relatively low use of the website as a source of information—there may be a need for outreach work to increase educators' comfort and familiarity with the use of this medium.

Respondents indicated that they often find it difficult to get information from DOE:

**Table 5 –** Summary of Responses Regarding Ease of Obtaining Information

| How easy is it to get information from the Department of Education? | Sup. | Prin. | Teach. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very Easy | 11.2% | 11.5% | 9.2% |
| Easy | 62.6% | 50.3% | 46.2% |
| Difficult | 15.9% | 26.8% | 24.6% |
| Very Difficult | 1.9% | 4.5% | 15.4% |

There were no differences between superintendents and principals on this item, but teachers were more likely to indicate that they found it difficult to obtain information from the Department of Education. Again, this pattern indicates that the lines of communication between DOE and teachers are more problematic than with the other educator constituencies. A number of comments from the open-ended questions also related to flow of information. More specifically, many respondents commented on how slow the Department of Education is at returning calls and answering inquiries. These issues may be symptoms of under-staffing at the Department, an issue that will be taken up in the next section of this report. Despite the generally negative pattern of responses, some of the open-ended question responses noted that the Department of Education has greatly improved communication through better use of technology and information systems.

Interviewees recommended increasing the linkages between the state, stakeholder organizations, and local school districts. Survey respondents were also asked in an open-ended question about their recommendations for change. While several themes emerged in response to this question, many respondents emphasized the need for more constructive relationships between the states and local districts, including more contact with and visits to the field by DOE staff.

**Conclusion**

DOE is not the only state-level entity involved in implementing Education Reform. Where other actors, such as the legislature and the Governor, have been involved, communication and coordination have posed challenges. Communication and coordination also appear to be challenging within DOE and between DOE and educators in the field. Many of these organizational issues may be the result of shortfalls in financial and human resources, which the next section of the report will discuss.

## Financial and Human Resource Issues

Outside of the Department of Education, there are only a few state staff who work on educational issues. For that reason, our analysis of financial and human resources for MERA implementation focuses on DOE. We consider financial and human resources in the same section because we found such a strong consensus that if DOE were to receive more funds it should spend them on staff.

MERA added to DOE's responsibilities, but did not take any functions away from the department. This fact, coupled with the large decline in the Department's staffing between 1980 and 1993 (from 990 to 325) and the net increase of only 13 FTE between 1993 and 1998, suggests that DOE is understaffed to fulfill its function under MERA as the leader in Education Reform.

Since 1980, the numbers of both state and federally funded positions at DOE have declined, but state-funded positions have declined more. As a result, DOE not only has fewer total staff than it did twenty years ago, but also has a smaller proportion of them free to work on state rather than federal programs.

### Federal- and State-Funded DOE Staff

Beginning with passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, state education agencies (SEA's) across the United States grew so that they could effectively implement federal policies (see Appendix 1 for more information). Between 1965 and 1970, total SEA staff nationwide doubled, with nearly 60% of the growth due to federal programs. In addition to compensatory education, education of students with disabilities, and bilingual education, the federal government also had a program (Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) specifically intended to increase SEAs' capacity to implement federal programs.

Figure 1 below shows how the proportion of DOE FTE's that are federally funded has grown while the overall number of DOE FTE's funded by both federal and state sources has shrunk. The data from which this table was constructed appear in Appendix 3.

**Figure 1**



MA DOE State and Federal Staffing Levels
FY80-FY01
(excludes consultants)

■ State FTE's  □ Federal FTE's
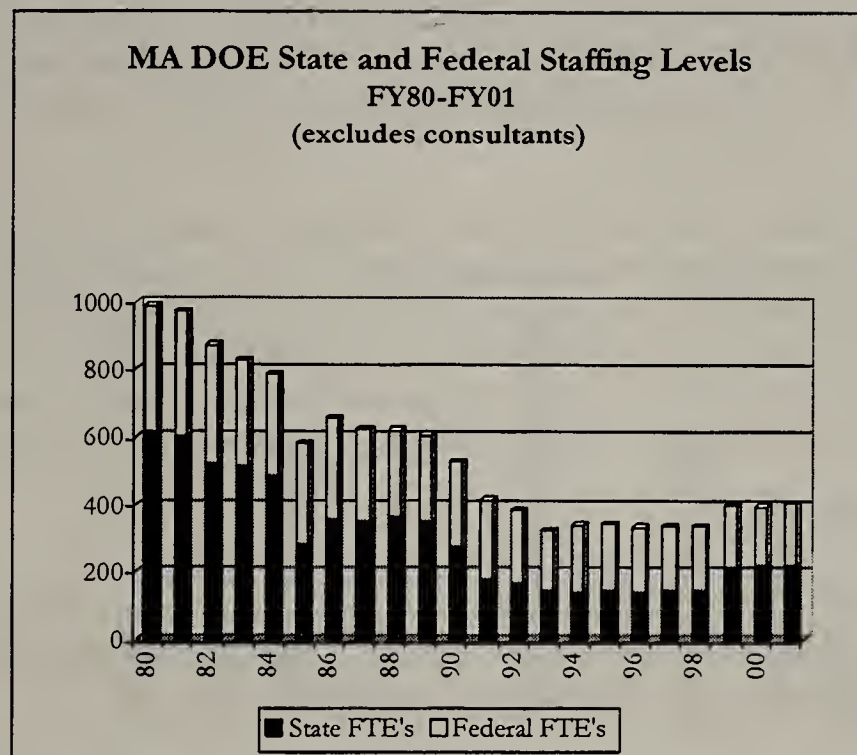
In general, the potential problem with having a large proportion of FTE's federally funded is that their job is to implement federal programs rather than state priorities. In a few cases, federal programs mesh well with MERA. Some of the DOE staffers we interviewed described using the flexibility Massachusetts had as one of the "Ed Flex" demonstration sites for the federal Goals 2000 program to enhance MERA implementation capacity. For example, Goals 2000 funds supported districts producing mentoring and certification plans in districts. Goals 2000 has also paid for professional development and for the sabbatical teachers who spend two years at DOE working with districts to help implement the Curriculum Frameworks. Unfortunately, Goals 2000 funding ends this year. Many other federal programs represent basic functions, such as school nutrition programs, that neither conflict with MERA nor are central to its implementation.

In areas where federal requirements are less flexible than in Goals 2000, DOE has recently run afoul of federal regulations in two areas. First, in some programs it has failed to make required matches of federal funds with state funds. Second, because of DOE's lack of administrative funds (see below), federal money has sometimes been used to support the department's administrative functions. Because this practice violates federal requirements, the state has had to reimburse the USDOE (paying a penalty plus interest) for funds used in this way.

## DOE as an "ATM"

The reason why DOE's staff levels have not risen much since 1993, despite huge increases in total state spending on education, is that, like other states, Massachusetts "passes through" nearly all of the state and federal funds it receives. According to a 1994 report by the United States General Accounting Office, 95% of all federal money and 99% of all state money received by state departments of education goes directly to local schools and districts (GAO, 1994). On the average, for every $1 retained by the Massachusetts DOE, $83 goes out to the districts. As one

DOE senior staff member put it in an interview, the Department acts like an "ATM" (automatic teller machine) for districts. After the Executive Office of Educational Affairs was eliminated, DOE's budget increased slightly, but when the state finally funded the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission, the money for it was taken out of the DOE's administrative budget.

When the legislature appropriates funds for programs, it generally does not set aside any portion for DOE administration. According to one of the DOE staff we interviewed, the DOE administration proposal included in this year's House version of the budget will not even cover rent on the department's two buildings. Another example of a large unfunded administrative expense is the printing and distribution of curriculum frameworks as they are written and revised. Districts have resisted the idea of downloading the documents from the DOE website.

## Resource Shortfalls at DOE

During 2000 and the first part of 2001, DOE was organized into eight clusters under the supervision of staff at the Associate Commissioner level, two areas supervised by Deputy Commissioners, and the Commissioner's Office itself (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**
**Simplified DOE Organizational Chart (prior to 2001 reorganization)**
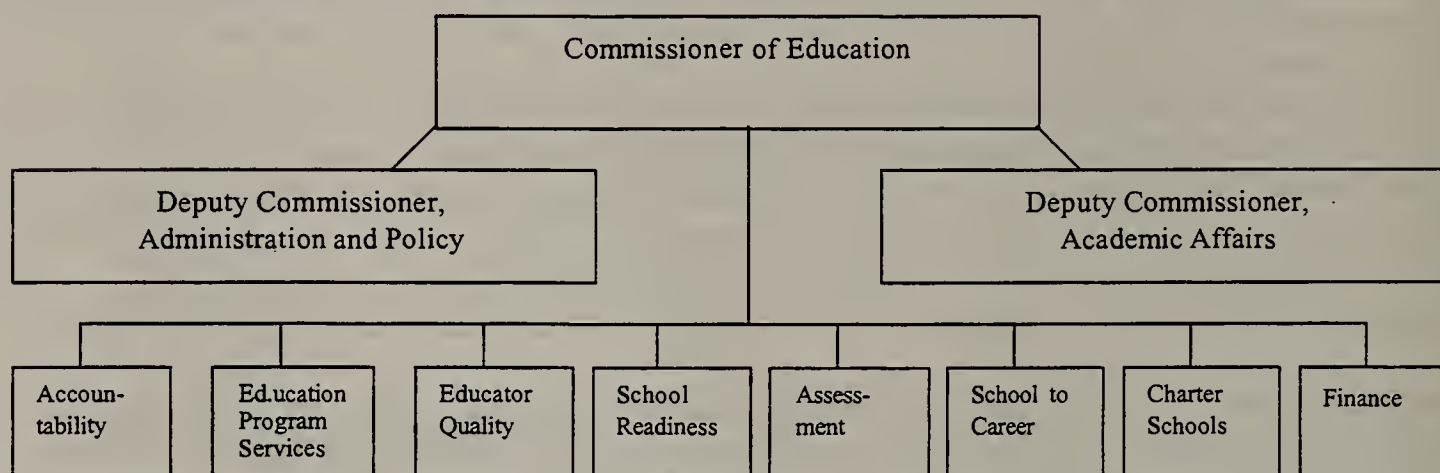


The bar graph below shows the number of full-time employees per DOE cluster in February, 2000. The largest number of full-time employees were in Accountability, Education Program Services, Finance, and School Readiness.

**Figure 3**
**Number of FTE's by DOE Cluster**
as of February 2000
(excludes part-time employees and consultants)

Chart data (Number of FTE's by DOE Cluster):
- Commissioner: 15
- Academic Affairs: 12
- Accountability: 53
- Admin & Policy: 19
- Charter Schools: 2
- Ed. Prog. Svcs.: 83
- Educator Quality: 28
- Finance: 53
- School Readiness: 43
- School to Career: 18
- Student Assessment: 11
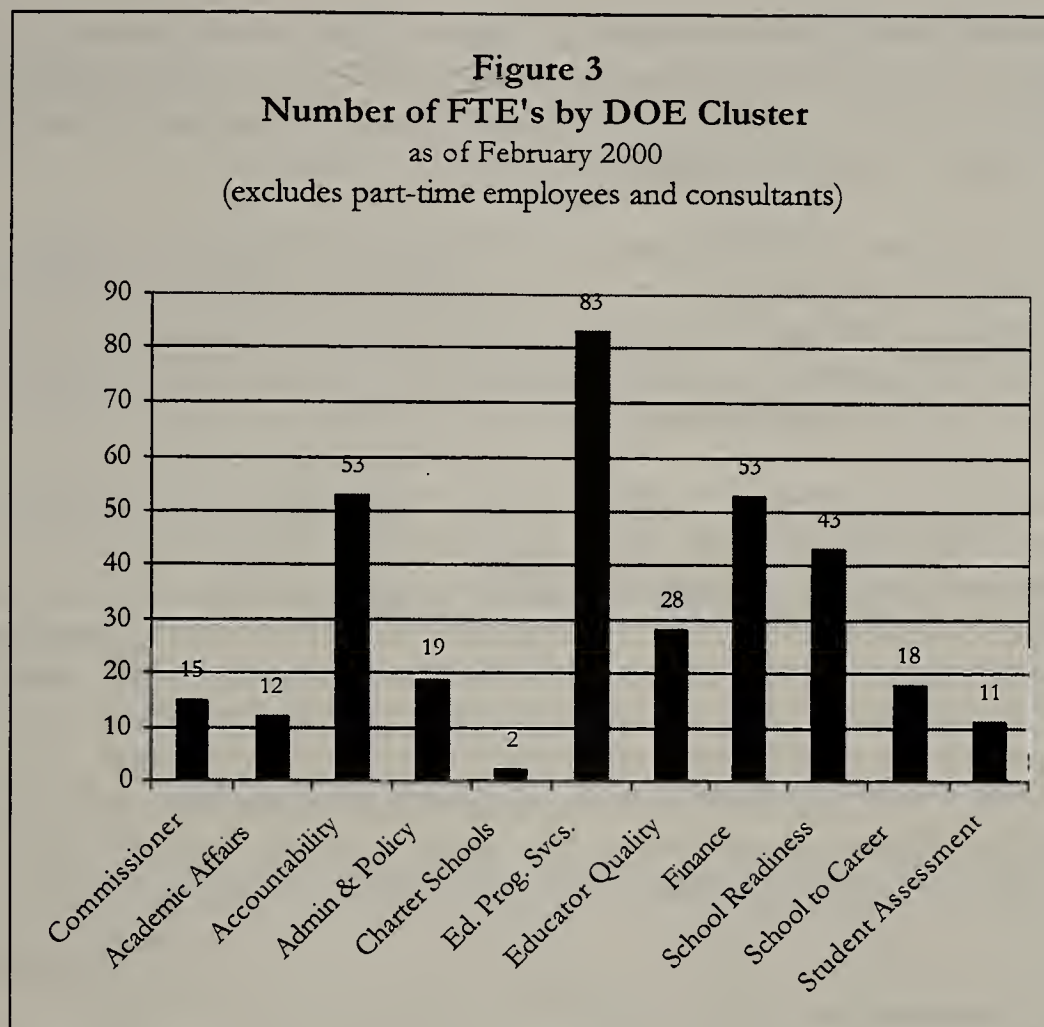
Source: Massachusetts Department of Education

Nearly all of our interviewees inside and outside DOE agreed that the Department does not have the resources it needs to implement Education Reform successfully. The major complaint (both from DOE people and others) is about staffing levels. DOE appears to be understaffed for both regulatory compliance functions and support functions.

In regulation, for example, districts' compliance with the Time and Learning requirements is not audited to ensure that reported "instructional time" actually is that, rather than study halls. Districts report to DOE on whether they are spending the required amount of money in areas such as professional development, but DOE does not impose any sanctions or penalties on districts that do not meet these spending requirements (see State Auditor's Report, 1997?).

DOE does not have sufficient staff to support districts' efforts to implement the curriculum frameworks (for the whole state, there are two sabbatical teachers at DOE offering support in the area of language arts). The Department does not have adequate internal staff for research and evaluation. It also does not support as broad a range of technical assistance to underperforming schools as do some other state departments. Professional development, a function that falls mainly within the Educator Quality cluster, is another area of major need. The legislature made a clear policy decision—based on the "tight-loose" conception of the state role in Education

Reform—to distribute resources to school districts, via the Chapter 70 funds earmarked for district professional development, rather than build capacity at the state level. This state-level capacity need not have been within DOE itself; one competing proposal was to create regional professional development centers in the state colleges.

According to the 1997 Report on professional development commissioned by MERRC and a study of the implementation of the state mathematics framework published by the Massachusetts Teachers' Association in 2000, the "tight-loose" assumption may not have been warranted in this area. Local districts and schools do not believe they know what to do to raise all students' achievement levels, and they resent the lack of guidance they have received from DOE.

Staffing levels are a big part of the lack of DOE capacity. In our surveys, local teachers and administrators agreed that DOE is understaffed. Our survey instruments included three questions intended to assess local educators' experiences with DOE staff. In response to the statement, "The Department of Education seems to have enough staff to carry out its responsibilities," 28.2% of respondents chose "strongly disagree," 30.7% chose "disagree," 12.8% chose "agree," and 3.9% chose "strongly agree," with the remainder selecting "I don't know." It is necessary to note that a larger proportion of individuals responded "I don't know" to the three survey items about DOE personnel than to any of the other twenty similar items. Between 20% and 34% of respondents chose that option for these three items. This may indicate that many district and school-level personnel have not had enough contact with the DOE to judge its capacity accurately.

The surveys also included an open-ended question about state support for MERA implementation: "Do you believe that the Department of Education has appropriate human, technical, or financial resources in order to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act?" In responses to this question, many respondents elaborated upon the point that DOE staff seem to be working as hard as they can and that the Department needs more staff. Another possibility is that DOE needs to redefine its employees' responsibilities.

## Use of Consultants by DOE

When it cannot get authorization for a new state position, or when managers want to go outside normal state hiring procedures for some reason, DOE often hires consultants (also known as "03's" after their position classification number). At any given time, there are between 60 and 90 consultants at DOE. The projects they work on may last several years (not necessarily with the same consultants). Based on our interviews, some consultants are working in positions that are neither temporary nor peripheral: a psychometrician in the assessment cluster, many of the staff who process certification paperwork, and the people running some of the smaller federal programs. Full information from FY 1995-2001 on the numbers of consultants, maximum and minimum amounts paid to consultants, and average payment to consultants for each DOE program area appears in Appendix 6 of this report. We were unable to obtain data on consultant use from years prior to FY 1995, which hinders our ability to compare trends in numbers of consultants with trends in regular FTE staffing during the period in which DOE's staff was cut most and during the first two years of MERA implementation.

The chart below shows the total numbers of consultants and regular FTE staff members at DOE for fiscal 1995-2000.

**Table 6—Regular Staff and Consultants at DOE, FY 1995-2000**

| Fiscal Year | FTE Staff | Consultants |
|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 346 | 83 |
| 1996 | 335 | 90 |
| 1997 | 338 | 82 |
| 1998 | 338 | 71 |
| 1999 | 399 | 77 |
| 2000 | 395 | 61 |

The largest numbers of consultants have worked in Certification Administration. Other DOE areas hiring relatively large numbers of consultants are Adult and Community Learning, Learning Support Services, Legislative Affairs, Math and Science, Operations Management, Reading, and Student Assessment.

**Table 7—Number of Consultants in DOE Programs, FY 1995-2000**

| | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accountability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Adult & Community Learning | 7 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Certification | 19 | 19 | 23 | 22 | 19 | 18 |
| Charter Schools | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chief Financial Officer | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chief Technology Officer | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Commissioner's Office | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| Administration & Policy | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Early Childhood | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Education Program Services | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Educator Prep. In Higher Ed. | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Humanities | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Learning Support Services | 13 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| Legal Office | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Legislative Affairs | 0 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Mathematics and Science | 4 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Media Relations | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Nutrition | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Operations Management | 0 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 4 |
| Program Quality Assurance | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Reading | 14 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| School Business | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| School to Career | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Special Education Appeals | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Special Services | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Student Assessment | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 83 | 90 | 82 | 71 | 77 | 61 |

DOE staff saw some advantages to using consultants. Hiring people as consultants rather than as state employees allows DOE to offer more money to qualified staff than the state salary scale permits. Also, the use of consultants can allow DOE to respond more quickly to programmatic needs because it is quicker to hire a consultant than to create a new state position.

For several reasons, it is difficult to tell whether use of consultants during the implementation of Education Reform compensated for the regular DOE staff lost during the 1980s and early 1990s. First, we do not have comparably detailed information on regular staff expenditures. Second, although we have data on how many consultants each area of DOE used and how much each consultant was paid, we do not know how many hours each person worked or what they did. Third, we do not know whether use of consultants increased or decreased during the years when DOE's regular staff was severely cut, so we cannot precisely determine the extent to which consultant use compensated for lost positions. Further study is needed of these important issues, in the context of DOE's overall staffing levels and patterns.

Based on the available data, however, we suspect that the consultants did not make up for a lack of professional staff. First, although we do not have data on the number of hours each consultant worked, we surmise from the amounts they were paid (see Appendix 6) that many if not most worked less than the equivalent of full time for DOE, so it is generally not fair to say that one consultant replaces one FTE. Second, the data in Table 7 show that in any given year, between 21% and 31% of all consultants working at DOE were in Certification Administration, and we know from interviews that these people's role was processing paperwork—a crucial Department function, but not one of the ones such as assessment and accountability in which DOE has faced enormous challenges in MERA implementation.

Even if use of consultants had fully filled the gaps left by cuts in regular DOE staffing, other factors make reliance on consultants only a second-best strategy. Over time, heavy use of consultants creates two tiers of staff earning different salaries and benefits (no benefits, in the case of the consultants). More problematically from the standpoint of comprehensive, long-term education reform, it often means more staff turnover. Consultants are generally either people seeking flexible work or people who would rather be in positions with full benefits, and in either case they are likely to change jobs frequently. As one interviewee outside of DOE commented, the most important issue may not be whether use of consultants is good or bad per se, but that the DOE lacks an overall plan for human resources with reference to which it can defend its use of consultants.

## Qualifications of DOE Staff

Many educators in the field perceive DOE staff as lacking appropriate qualifications or education experience. In our survey, nearly half of the respondents who answered the item about whether "Department of Education staff members have the qualifications and experiences they need to provide useful support to schools and districts" chose "strongly agree" or "disagree," compared with 18.1% who chose "agree" or "strongly agree." The remainder chose "I don't know," with teachers much more likely than principals or superintendents to choose this option. Among those who did answer, administrators were almost twice as likely as teachers to give favorable responses, and superintendents were more likely than principals to view DOE staff qualifications favorably.

There are many positions at DOE, such as in financial management, law, and public relations, for which school-based experience does not seem to be especially important. It is also not accurate to say that DOE senior staff generally lack school-based experience. A few (including the Commissioner) have extensive experience as teachers or administrators, and most have done at least some teaching. However, because at the most senior levels DOE staff are likely to have been with the agency for a significant portion of their careers, their field experience is not recent. Also, some of the highest-profile senior staff have the least district- or school-based experience.

In the positions for which school-based experience is important, one obstacle to bringing educators into DOE staff positions is that the state employee pay scale is generally lower, for twelve-month contracts than what experienced teachers, and especially administrators, can earn in the field (often on nine- or ten-month contracts). Figure 4 shows this gap.



Figure 4
Average Annual Salary Estimates Local
Schools/Districts v. Dept. of Education
(FY 2000)
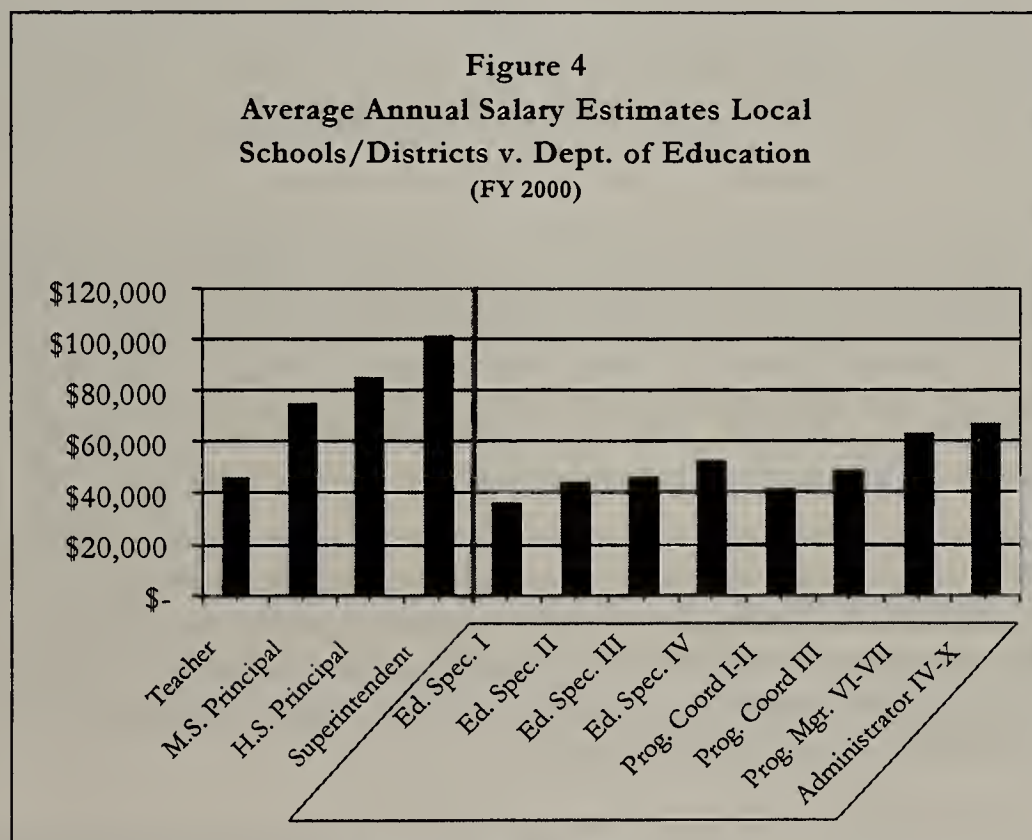
Sources: Massachusetts Teachers Association, Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Department of Education

Because DOE does not have data available on salaries of teachers or administrators, the averages in Figure 4 come from information provided by teacher and administrator associations. According to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which represents the bulk of DOE's professional employees, most of the Education Specialists are at Levels III and IV. The Program Coordinators whose salaries were used to calculate the averages in the chart are in supervisory, high technology, program coordination, or professional positions, identified by their membership in Unit 6 of the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE). The

average management salaries were calculated based on salaries for fiscal 2000.[1] The salary gaps shown in the chart are a major reason why there are not more experienced teachers and administrators working at DOE. For administrators, shortages of principals and superintendents in Massachusetts and elsewhere are probably also a factor.

## Specific Areas of Capacity and Resource Needs at DOE

In our interviews with a wide cross-section of DOE staff and other state-level policy makers and stakeholders, several key areas emerged in which DOE particularly needs resources or additional capacity to carry out its MERA responsibilities.

The first major area of need, accountability, goes beyond DOE and includes the new accountability function of the Governor's Office. For MERA to work as intended, the state needs to have the capacity to hold all schools and districts accountable for improved student performance, rather than only identifying and intervening in a few. Staff is a big part of the need, but so is funding for data collection and potential contracting out of some evaluation functions.

Overall, data collection is the second area of need. Ever since the beginning of Education Reform, capacity for data collection and management has lagged behind what is needed to monitor districts' compliance with the law and progress towards implementation. The state will soon launch its online "data warehouse" of student and teacher information (including test scores), called Data Mart, but online data collection will continue to be an area of major resource demands.

Data collection is related to a third major area of need, research and evaluation. DOE lacks both the staff to do major evaluations and the funds to contract with external providers for evaluation and research work. MERRC has the legal authority to conduct research and evaluation, but has not had the necessary resources over the whole course of Education Reform. If DOE is to function as a learning organization and to guide local implementation of Education Reform effectively, greater capacity in these areas is crucial.

Other areas of need cited by DOE staff are the School Building Assistance program, assessment, content area expertise, and bilingual education. Some of these needs might be filled through means other than increasing staff at DOE itself. For example, several state leaders believe that the School Building Assistance program should draw upon the expertise of other executive-branch agencies that do similar work. Content area expertise, and assistance in producing test items for MCAS, might come from field-based educators on contract to DOE.

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[1] The average teacher salary was reported by the Massachusetts Teachers' Association based on information from the 1999-2000 school year. The average middle school and high school principal salaries for 1999-2000 are estimates provided by the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators (a precise figure was unavailable). The average superintendent's salary is based on information reported by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents for the 1999-2000 school year. All of the DOE salary averages are based on the average of FY 2000 actual salaries reported by DOE.

For the staff who are currently at DOE, little if any professional development is available, and because of demands on their time it is difficult for them to take advantage of the opportunities that do exist through the state Human Resources Department. Senior staff would like to have professional development opportunities that would both keep their staff intellectually engaged with their fields, and to build their skills in areas like staff management and conflict mediation. Several commented that the lack of training in administration is a more serious problem for the department as a whole than the lack of formal training in content matters. There is also a need to make sure that employees who deal with schools and the public have solid understanding of MERA, particularly given rising controversy over MCAS.

## Conclusion

The major capacity challenge facing the Department of Education is inadequate numbers of staff. The high proportion of DOE staff who are in federally funded positions also reduces the department's flexibility in responding to state policy priorities. There is particular need for staff in data collection and management, school building assistance, assessment, professional development, and curriculum content areas. DOE's use of consultants has both allowed greater flexibility in hiring and posed problems of equity and staff turnover; use of consultants has dropped as regular staff has grown slightly. Educators in the field say that DOE needs more staff with extensive experience in schools and districts, but the state pay scale poses difficulties in recruiting such people.

In Part III of the report, we will survey the state's MERA responsibilities in ten key areas and examine how political, organizational, and resource issues have affected the state's implementation capacity.

# III.   State Capacity in Specific Areas

At the beginning of our research process, we closely examined the duties assigned to the state by the Education Reform Act and separated them into ten categories:

1) Developing and implementing *standards* of learning;
2) Developing and administering a system of *student assessment*;
3) Developing an *accountability system* for school and district performance;
4) Supporting and changing *local governance and management* of public education;
5) Making effective *state level policy* decisions;
6) *Collecting and using information* to inform policy decisions and improve the performance of the state's educational system;
7) *Enhancing educator quality* and education as a profession through new processes for certification and professional development;
8) Ensuring *readiness to learn* through early childhood and literacy programs;
9) *Encouraging school choice* by requiring all districts to accept students from other districts unless their School Committee specifically voted not to and creating *charter schools*;
10) Allocating *funding* in a way that is adequate and equitable, both within and across districts.

In this section, we report on the state's capacity to implement Education Reform in each of these ten areas. In interviews, it was often difficult for our respondents to separate their perceptions of the state's capacity from their overall evaluation of the policies the state was implementing. Our analysis focuses as much as possible on capacity issues rather than on the policies themselves. To be fair to those involved in implementing Education Reform, it should be noted that many of the issues we point out in this section of the report are much clearer in hindsight than they would have been to decision makers and state officials in the early years of MERA implementation. All citations to the law are to the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, Chapter 70 of the Acts and Resolves of 1993.

## 1. Developing and Implementing Standards of Learning

Section 29 of MERA (Section 1D of M.G.L. Chapter 69), among many other provisions, authorizes the Board of Education to direct the Commissioner of Education to institute a process for producing curriculum frameworks in the core subjects (mathematics, science and technology, history and social sciences, English, foreign languages, and the arts). Producing the curriculum frameworks, however, was only a small portion of the work that needed to be done in order to implement them. Implementing high standards for all students was related to many other MERA tasks, such as increasing instructional time, integrating academic and vocational education, eliminating the general track in high schools, and reviewing programs in bilingual and special education.

## Producing the Standards

Although the law did not specifically mandate a Common Core of Learning, the Department of Education began by producing one. According to the DOE's 1993 Implementation Plan for Education Reform, the Educational Improvement team had responsibility for development of the interdisciplinary Common Core of Learning. Responsibility for the Curriculum Frameworks, which would be written after the Common Core was in place, lay with the Instructional and Curriculum Services team and the Partnerships Advancing Learning in Mathematics and Science (PALMS) project.

In order to produce standards, DOE needed access to content-area expertise. DOE-based staff drew upon a broad range of expertise in producing the standards. The Common Core of Learning process and the early stages of the production of the Frameworks involved a large number of local educators teaching in each area. DOE also has had Sabbatical Teachers working in various content areas, funded by the federal Goals 2000 program. According to one DOE staff member who has been involved with the standards, typically two or three DOE staff work with a panel of between 12 and 20 educators for about eighteen months to produce each subject area framework. MERA directs the Commissioner (and by extension, the Department) to construct standards "with due regard to the work and recommendations of national organizations." The process drew upon standard-setting work being done by these associations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

For some of our respondents, the drafting of the Common Core and the initial process for developing Curriculum Frameworks demonstrates the power of "distributed systems" for policy implementation. From this perspective, because so many educators participated in producing the Common Core (and the earlier drafts of the Curriculum Frameworks), they were excited about putting them to use in their schools and classrooms. Involving so many people in effect built extra capacity for the state, outside of its formal institutional structures. Admirers of the early process contrast it with the more centralized process by which the Frameworks were revised during John Silber's term as Chair of the Board of Education. They claim that the more centralized approach taken by Silber requires more formal capacity than the participatory approach, such as internal content expertise and more staff for communicating the standards to educators who are unfamiliar with (or in some cases, opposed to) them.

## Implementing the Standards

Even more challenging than developing standards is ensuring that they are actually implemented by local schools and districts. To get a sense of the magnitude of this task, consider that there are 371 school districts, 1,874 schools, and 71,900 teachers in the Commonwealth. Early in Education Reform, state-level leaders assumed that local educators would be able to make effective implementation decisions without a great deal of state intervention. However, in practice this assumption has not been uniformly borne out across the state.

In our survey, 30.9% of respondents said the state has done a "good" job of supporting schools and districts in aligning curricula with the state frameworks. An additional 5.9% said support has been "excellent," while 27.5% said "fair" and 20.5% said "poor." The larger districts have

curriculum coordinators who can lead alignment of curricula with the Frameworks, but the smaller ones do not. DOE has supported implementation through professional development programs such as the summer Content Institutes for teachers. It has also used the Goals 2000-funded Sabbatical Teachers to work with local educators. However, the Sabbatical Teachers have been stretched rather thin. For example, in the area of English Language Arts only two Sabbatical Teachers have provided advice on implementation of the Curriculum Frameworks to districts statewide.

One largely untapped potential source of support in content areas is the state's higher education system. Although there is considerable interest and concern on the part of higher education leaders, engaging a wide range of faculty may be challenging. For many higher education faculty in arts and sciences (i.e. outside schools of education), teacher preparation and professional development are peripheral concerns.

A longer-term source of funding for the Sabbatical Teachers program (ideally, an increase in funding as well) is necessary if the program is to continue supporting implementation of the Curriculum Frameworks. The Goals 2000 money that has been supporting the program is scheduled to run out later this year because the federal program has been terminated.

## 2. Developing and Implementing a System of Student Assessment

MERA has two specific provisions that require the state to assess what students have learned. Section 29 (M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1I) requires the board to adopt a criterion-referenced assessment[2] "designed both to measure outcomes and results regarding student performance, and to improve the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction." This assessment is to be used as the basis of the system for evaluating school and district performance. The law also requires "comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students" to be conducted "at least in the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades." These diagnostic assessments "shall identify academic achievement levels of all students in order to inform teachers, parents, administrators and the students themselves, as to individual academic performance."

DOE's 1993 MERA implementation plan assigned the task of "developing and implementing a system of student assessment" to the Accountability and Evaluation Services Team. Although the law implies that test used in the school and district evaluation might be different from the one used in diagnostic assessment of individual students, Massachusetts, like other states, uses a single assessment for both purposes. This test is the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). DOE's 1993 MERA implementation plan assigned the task of "developing and implementing a system of student assessment" to the Accountability and Evaluation Services Team.

Developing a standardized assessment is an enormous job, requiring both content expertise and knowledge of the principles of psychometrics, the science of testing. The assessment staff at

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[2] A criterion-referenced assessment is one in which student performance is evaluated against an absolute standard, in contrast to a norm-referenced assessment, which ranks students' performances in comparison to each other.

DOE is relatively small, but has expanded its capacity by using contractors to produce the MCAS.

Apart from developing the tests, many other functions are part of running the assessment program. Scoring the tests is a massive undertaking, in particular the essay and problem-solving components. This year's administration of MCAS produced ten million written responses from students. DOE staff are responsible for managing the assessment program, conducting outreach to parents and educators, supervising the contractor's work, and producing numerous reports and publications (300 in the past year). Determining what accommodations to provide for students with disabilities and other special populations is also a responsibility of the Department and Board of Education.

Most people believe that MCAS is technically among the very best standards-based state tests and that the test itself has been well-implemented. However, some believe that the state has failed to "employ a variety of assessment instruments" and "include consideration of work samples, projects and portfolios, and…facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance" as Section 29 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1I) requires. To some extent, this can be seen as a capacity issue, since this sort of assessment would almost certainly require either more staff for DOE or more funds to use in contracting for outside help. However, capacity is not the only issue—the Board of Education made a decision to employ only a standardized assessment, which many experts believe is more valid and reliable than assessment of portfolios and projects.

In our interviews and on our survey we heard criticisms of how other elements of assessment policy have been implemented. One problem is the lack of attention to testing issues for special populations, and the Board of Education's delay in putting a policy in place on retesting for students who fail the tenth-grade MCAS. It seems that many leaders in the state did not grasp at the outset how large the challenges in these areas would be. Both omissions seem to have reduced the field's confidence in state policy makers. Getting student assessment results to schools and districts in a timely manner has proved extremely challenging for the state's contractors and for DOE staff, as has assisting local educators in understanding what the results mean.

In the area of "interpreting MCAS results," 39.8% of local educators rated the state's support as "good" or "excellent," 56.7% as "fair" or "poor," and the remainder didn't know. In our survey, 66.7% of respondents rated the state's support of local efforts at "providing support for students who score poorly on MCAS" as "poor" or "fair." 29.7% rated the state's support in that area as "good" or "excellent," and the remainder chose "don't know."

The main reason why these functions have not been carried out as well as DOE staff and state policymakers might like is a lack of staff. Even though the assessment team at DOE has been relatively well-funded, the office only had eleven full-time staff and two consultants in FY 2000. Areas of current need for staff include coordination of communications and publications, testing of special populations such as students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities, and an in-house psychometrician on regular staff (currently, the staff psychometrician is a consultant). Several interviewees noted that even though a great deal of the

program is carried out by a contractor, DOE needs sufficient assessment staff to ensure that the contractor continues to act in the best interest of Massachusetts students.

## 3. Developing an Accountability System for School and District Performance

Section 29 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1I) directs the Board of Education to "adopt a system for evaluating on an annual basis the performance of both public school districts and individual public schools" and declares, "The commissioner is authorized and directed to gather information, including the information specified herein [the assessment system] and such other information as the board shall require, for the purposes of evaluating individual public schools, school districts, and the efficacy and equity of state and federal mandated programs."

As the name of the relevant DOE cluster, Accountability and Targeted Assistance, suggests, there are two components to an accountability system—how districts are identified as in need of improvement, and how districts with problems are given assistance to overcome them. Precisely which parts of the state government have authority to perform each of these tasks, and what the tasks entail, has been somewhat unsettled for the past several years.

### Accountability

In the area of accountability, there have been capacity problems caused by both insufficient resources and unclear organizational lines. Because of limited resources, the state accountability system emphasizes oversight of a few schools that appear to have the most egregious problems, rather than the Education Reform principle of continuous improvement for all schools in the Commonwealth. Compounding the resource problem, several state-level organizations have claimed roles in accountability, producing overlapping mandates and inter-agency conflict.

Also, because Section 29 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1J) requires that the accountability determinations be based on the results of the state student assessment, delays in implementing MCAS produced delays in the accountability system.

Section 29 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 69, Sections 1J and 1K) assigns accountability functions to the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education. The Board is to "establish regulations defining when a school or school district has chronically failed to improve the educational program provided to students served by the school or district," approve districts' remedial plans for under-performing schools, declare a school to be "chronically under-performing" if it does not demonstrate significant improvement according to its remedial plan within 24 months after the plan's approval, and designate a receiver to take a district over when it is chronically under-performing. MERA directs the Commissioner to "appoint an independent fact-finding team which shall forthwith assess the reasons for the under-performance and the prospects for improvement" when a school or district is identified as under-performing or has consistently failed to improve student performance. If the Board of Education determines that a district is "chronically under-performing for fiscal reasons," then the Commissioner of Revenue becomes involved. He or she "shall determine the amount of any deficiency pursuant to the

sums required under chapter seventy, if any, and issue an order compelling the community to provide a sum of money equal to such deficiency."

In the 1993 implementation plan, the task of developing a "process and regulations to identify, assist, and intervene in underperforming schools, districts, and municipalities" was assigned to the Deputy Commissioner and the DOE Legal Counsel. Largely because MCAS was not administered until 1998, the Board of Education did not approve accountability regulations until late in 1999. Consequently, the most serious accountability sanctions included in MERA have not yet been used. We can, however, identify a serious capacity issue in the uncertainty over which entity within the state government would take charge of holding schools and districts accountable. This uncertainty has compounded the delay in implementing the accountability and targeted assistance functions.

Between 1997 and 2000, four different state entities (the State Auditor, the Education Management and Accountability Board, the Program Quality Assurance office within DOE, and the Board of Education) took responsibility for evaluating district compliance with MERA. The first state agencies to take a role in holding districts accountable specifically for the goals of Education Reform were outside the DOE, before the MCAS was in place to serve as the cornerstone of the Board of Education's accountability regulations. In 1997, the State Auditor produced critical audits of Education Reform as a whole, and of the Lawrence Public Schools in particular. The *Boston Globe* reported on questionable spending by school officials in Lawrence, in response to which Education Commissioner Robert Antonucci asked the Auditor to investigate. Spurred by revelations that large sums of Education Reform money had been spent inappropriately in Lawrence, Governor William Weld created the Education Management and Accountability Board (EMAB) by executive order in 1998. EMAB reviewed the implementation of Education Reform in 22 districts and produced both individual district reports and an aggregate report on the first 19 audits. DOE's Accountability and Targeted Assistance group collaborated with EMAB on several of those audits.

Prior to Education Reform, DOE already had an accountability office of sorts in the Program Quality Assurance cluster (PQA). The role of PQA is to monitor local compliance with state and federal regulations in areas such as bilingual education and special education. PQA did not initially have a role in monitoring Education Reform, but the PQA office developed a protocol for including MERA requirements in their Consolidated Program Reviews and piloted it during the 1999-2000 academic year.

Late in 1999, the Board of Education produced its regulations and the Accountability and Targeted Assistance cluster of DOE began preparing to evaluate districts identified as underperforming because of low and stagnant MCAS scores. Some critics claim that the Board's regulations rely too heavily on MCAS, which is designed to assess the learning of individual students rather than the performance of schools. One alternative would be a different sort of assessment, specifically designed to measure school performance. Maryland uses such a test (MSPAP) at the elementary school level. Another would be a system of evaluation for all schools, including visits by evaluation teams. For more information on one alternative model, see the section of Appendix 1 on Rhode Island's accountability system.

In 2000, Governor Cellucci included a provision in his budget proposal that would have shifted the entire accountability function to a new board to be located in the Governor's Office, which cast uncertainty over the work of DOE's accountability staff. In the spring of 2001, the situation was resolved. The new Education Management Audit Council, chaired by James Peyser (also the Board of Education chair and education advisor to Acting Governor Jane Swift) and housed in the Governor's Office, will take charge of the "accountability" function of Education Reform. The Accountability and Targeted Assistance cluster of DOE will take charge of assisting underperforming schools, and PQA, which is within Accountability and Targeted Assistance, will continue the regulatory work it was already doing but will no longer monitor compliance with Education Reform.

**Targeted Assistance**

According to MERA (Section 29; M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1J), the Commissioner of Education is to provide "technical assistance for the improvement of the educational program" during implementation of the remedial plan for a school that has been designated as underperforming (producing this remedial plan is the district's responsibility). As in the area of accountability, DOE's efforts at targeted assistance have been criticized both for being implemented too slowly and for involving too few schools. DOE faces three capacity-related difficulties in implementing supports for underperforming schools.

First, such support is likely to require large quantities of funding and expertise, which are in short supply. Five new positions added to the School and District Improvement Planning and Assistance to Underperforming Schools area within DOE will help, but more staff is probably still necessary, particularly if the targeted assistance function is thought of broadly, as including prevention of problems. Contracting with educators in the field to provide assistance to their peers is a promising direction, but even if DOE draws upon experts from outside its staff, it still needs funds in order to pay them for their services and to pay DOE staff who oversee the process.

Second, it will be carrying out this support role in a climate of local resistance to much of MERA and frustration at what many educators see as an overly punitive state presence. The shift of accountability to the EMAC may help somewhat, in that DOE could play "good cop" to the EMAC's "bad cop."

Finally, even some people who generally believe DOE does good work are unsure of what an effective system of targeted assistance would look like. This is one of the most important and most difficult components of standards-based reform. Kentucky's Highly Skilled Educators program provides one interesting model, which is described in Appendix 1.

## 4. Supporting Local Education Governance and Management

In addition to changing the state's responsibility for public education, MERA also included provisions that altered responsibilities for governance and management of schools at the local level. Under Section 53 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 59C), each public school in the

Commonwealth must have a School Council consisting of the principal, parents of current students, teachers, other community representatives, and, in high schools, at least one student. The School Council's role is to "meet regularly with the principal of the school and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, in the review of the annual school budget, and in the formulation of a school improvement plan."

According to MERA, the school improvement plans must address class size, professional development for school staff, "allocation of any professional development funds in the annual school budget," "enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school," safety, discipline, "a welcoming school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups," extracurricular activities, inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education programs, language acquisition for speakers of languages other than English, and other subjects deemed appropriate by the principal. School Committees may also devolve additional authority to School Councils if they so choose.

MERA also affected governance and management at the district level. Section 35 of MERA (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37) limits the powers of School Committees to hiring and firing the Superintendent of Schools, reviewing and approving the district public education budget, and establishing educational goals and policies for the schools in the district, consistent with statewide laws and policies. Superintendents in turn appoint principals, who gained the authority to hire and fire staff in their schools (Sec.44/MGL Ch.71 sec. 42) but lost tenure (MERA Sec. 45, repealing MGL Ch. 71 sec. 42A) and the right to bargain collectively (Sec.43/MGL Ch. 71 sec. 41).

Although these changes all affect local, rather than state, decision making processes, state authorities have had a role in their implementation. DOE's 1993 implementation plan assigns the task of promoting school councils and site-based management to the Center for Innovation, a research and development unit within DOE. Although implementation of school councils was a major priority of the Center for Innovation, it was less so for DOE as a whole. The major implementation strategy for school councils was the issuing of guidelines to districts; DOE did not provide much technical assistance for districts on how to make the school councils work. The Center for Innovation, which according to the 1993 Implementation Plan also had the responsibility to "provide ongoing information, technical assistance, and training to support school districts in implementing Education Reform," was disbanded in the mid-1990s. Its director stayed at the Department in another position, and its functions were distributed among other offices within DOE, but they were not given a high priority.

In its audits conducted in 1999 and 2000, the Education Management Accountability Board found that many districts it studied had not made the MERA governance and management changes in a genuine way. The districts were not negotiating individually with principals, and School Improvement Plans in some districts did not address "student performance, test results, or other measurable indicators of student achievement."

Although people outside of DOE approved of some of the changes made to the powers of superintendents and school committees, they also said that the school councils have not been especially useful and that DOE could have done a better job of supporting them after they were

first created. Some interviewees criticized the way in which the state has left the districts on their own in responding to the new standards and tests, without funding technical assistance. One wondered whether the "loose-tight" assumption that districts would be able to choose the best way to meet the mandatory goals was actually warranted, given most districts' limited administrative and curriculum planning resources. Some have noted that school committees and school councils are unable or unwilling to provide the kind of support and assistance that districts need, and are in need of training and support themselves. Section 42 of MERA (MGL Ch. 71, Sec. 38Q) requires districts' professional development plans to include training for members of school councils, but such training has generally not been widely available.

Building local districts' own internal capacity for reform and maintaining public support for reform efforts are also key to the state's support for change in local governance and management of schools. These areas have been problematic. Survey results show that local educators believe the state has unrealistic expectations of districts and schools under Education Reform. Asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement "the state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of districts in implementing the Education Reform Act," 54.3% disagreed and 12.0% strongly disagreed. Given an identical statement about schools, 51.0% disagreed and 10.1% strongly disagreed. In some districts, public support for MERA (and especially MCAS) is weak.

Lack of state-level monitoring and support for local governance and management changes is most likely the result of both scarce resources and a higher priority given to other issues such as standard-setting and student assessment. As in other Education Reform areas, state authorities backed away from a strong regulatory role because leaders deemed an interventionist state posture to be inappropriate.

Despite the state's general reluctance to intervene, several of our interviewees said that technical assistance and training for School Committees and School Councils would be helpful. The lines of accountability in MERA essentially bypass school committees, because the state evaluates the academic performance of schools rather than districts. Formally, principals report to superintendents, who are hired and evaluated by school committees, but they also must be concerned about meeting state-mandated improvement goals. In some communities where the public and members of the school committee are opposed to MCAS and its use in the state accountability system, it is hard for educators to satisfy both state and local authorities. Professional development or training for School Committee members might ameliorate this problem

## 5. Making Coherent State-Level Policy

MERA posed a major challenge for ongoing formation and implementation of state education policy. It required not only that the structures and processes of the K-12 public education system change, but also that they change in a systematic and coherent way consistent with standards-based reform. In order for state authorities to play their role in coordinating local efforts, they must themselves act in a coordinated way to guide and monitor education activities.

Implementation of MERA entailed an ongoing policy making process that involved the Board of Education, the Department of Education, the advisory committees to the Board (see MERA , Section 3/ MGL Ch. 15, Section 1G, MERA Section 14/ MGL Ch. 15A, Section 2), the Secretary of Education, the legislature, and the executive branch, in particular the Governor. As discussed above in Part II, this process has often lacked coordination, since different actors at the state level have different sets of priorities that do not always coincide.

The state-level institutions themselves have changed. The Board of Education was reduced from 17 to 9 members. The office of Secretary of Education, which under Education Reform had responsibility for analyzing "the present and future goals, needs and requirements of public education in the commonwealth" and recommending "to the board of education and the higher education coordinating council comprehensive goals necessary to achieve a well-coordinated system of high achievement in public education in the commonwealth," as well as preparing "an annual master plan for public education" and reporting to the public each year on the condition of public education in the Commonwealth, was eliminated in 1996. As mentioned earlier, the Center for Innovation within DOE, which had the job of staffing the advisory committees, no longer exists.

Listening to and working with the field is important if a reform of the scope of MERA is to succeed, and many believe that state authorities have not engaged enough with the field. The advisory committees and public reports could have been central to this communication, but in many people's minds have not achieved their potential.

DOE and other state-level entities have begun addressing some of the problems of policy coordination and communication with the field. It appears that the uncertainty over the accountability roles of DOE and EMAC is in the process of resolution. DOE's Associate Commissioner for Assessment has made several well-received visits to school districts to discuss MCAS with local educators. A few of our interviewees said that the current leadership of BOE and DOE has been more willing to reach out and listen to the field than they were during John Silber's term as Board Chair. In December, 2000, the DOE added a Director of Community Outreach who serves as a liaison between DOE and the field. Improved communication may restore cooperation between state and local education authorities.


## 6. Collecting and Using Information to Improve the Performance of the Educational System

Coordination of policy making, accountability, and communication requires that the state collect appropriate information and use it in ways that contribute to system improvement. This is true not only of the state education system, but also of any other system undergoing reform or continuous improvement (Kaplan and Norton, 1992).

MERA contains several specific provisions related to the collection and use of data. One of the most important of these is the mandate for collection of data on school and student performance and the use of that data to hold schools accountable (see above). Others include a requirement (MERA Section 29; MGL Ch. 69, Sec. 1B) that the board publish profiles of each public school

and district, including information on "student achievement of performance goals, school spending, special programs, curriculum offerings, qualifications of teaching staff, and other information which may be pertinent to teachers, parents, students, and elected officials regarding the performance of said schools and school districts." The 1993 Implementation Plan assigned this function to the Executive Office of Educational Affairs. The same section of MERA also directs the Board to identify schools and districts that are especially successful in improving student performance and "undertake to analyze and publish the strategies employed by such schools and districts for the purpose of recognizing the efforts of the educators involved and of encouraging the replication, where appropriate, of their successful strategies." According to the Implementation Plan, this function was to be carried out by DOE's division of Evaluation, Planning, and Research in tandem with EOEA.

The requirement that the Secretary of Education produce an annual report on the condition of education in the Commonwealth (MERA Section 16, amending MGL Ch.15A, Sec.3) also is part of the overall system for collecting and using information. This section of the law was repealed in 1996 when the office of Secretary of Education was eliminated. The section of MERA on school choice (see below) requires a parent information system for choice, including but not limited to "information on special programs offered by the school, philosophy of the school, number of spaces available, transportation plans, class sizes, teacher/student ratios, and data and information on school performance that indicate its quality." The law stipulates that this information include the school profiles (MERA sec. 61/MGL ch. 76, sec.12B (h)). Like the dissemination of successful models of education, this function was to be shared between the Evaluation, Planning, and Research division of DOE and the EOEA.

In addition, Section 79 of MERA directs the Governor to appoint an Education Reform Review Commission with authority to "monitor the extent to which the commonwealth has carried out its responsibilities under this act and the extent to which such efforts have brought about educational reform in the commonwealth." The law gives the Commission the "right to request from the board of education, the secretary of education, and the joint committee on education, arts, and humanities information and data pertinent" to its charge, including the information being used to assess school and student performance. The Education Reform Review Commission also was intended to have data-gathering capacity, but has not because of the delay in funding it at all and the low levels of funding it ultimately received.

Finally, the legislature's Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities could conceivably have played a major role in oversight of MERA implementation, but it has not. The Committee has a very small staff.

In addition to the data-gathering functions explicitly outlined in MERA, several of the law's provisions, such as accountability and teacher quality, implicitly require data analysis. Collection and use of information about education by the state includes five subtasks. First, the state needs to have a strategy for identifying and collecting appropriate data that meet the needs of state and local data users. Second, data-gathering instruments must be designed and data collected, either from local education authorities or directly by the state. Third, the accuracy of data collected from local authorities must be verified. Fourth, the data must be analyzed and

made available in a form that is useful to decision makers. Fifth, the data must actually be used in evaluation or decision processes.

From the beginning, the state's capacity to collect and use data has been an area of concern. In 1994, Rep. Mark Roosevelt stated that DOE needed to improve its data collection capacity because there was not enough accurate, understandable data about school spending (p. 5). The MBAE's 1995 report *Within Our Reach* also calls for more data collection, as does the EMAB report issued in 2000 (p. 40).

One of the entities that initially had the most responsibility for data collection, the Executive Office for Educational Affairs, no longer exists at all. The other, DOE's Division of Evaluation, Planning, and Research, first became part of the Division of Finance and Accountability and by 2001 did not appear at all on the organizational chart. One Evaluation and Research Specialist reported directly to the Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs, and there were Data Collection, Data Processing, and Data Analysis and Reporting units within the Accountability and Targeted Assistance operation. The Education Reform Review Commission did not have any staff or funding until 1997, and still is funded quite modestly relative to the size of its statutory task. Most of our interviewees cited the lack of accurate data and policy evaluation based upon it as a major shortcoming of Education Reform implementation. For example, the state is attempting to enhance the quality and preparation of its teaching force without comprehensive data on how and where current Massachusetts teachers were prepared and which areas are likeliest to experience teacher shortages in the near future. In another areas, an interview said, *"My impression as a completely uninformed outsider is that there's been much more interest in using technology for flashy applications, like the...Virtual Education Space instead of the sort of bread and butter stuff of, you know, where do kids go and what classes did they take, and how did they do."*

Data collection and use is a crucial part of the state-local relationship. Our survey indicates moderate levels of local dissatisfaction with the state's collection and use of data, and an almost even split (slightly favoring "agree") on whether data from DOE are helpful in improving the quality of education:

**Table 8** – Educators' Experience with the State's Use of Data
("Don't know" answers omitted.)

| Type of Experience | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Department of Education collects appropriate data from schools | 11.2% | 38.5% | 38.1% | 3.6% |
| The Department of Education uses these data appropriately | 16.1% | 39.4% | 20.4% | 1.8% |
| The data my district gets from the Department of Education are helpful in our efforts to improve the quality of education | 11.5% | 34.6% | 38.0% | 3.6% |

The first two items were not asked of teachers, but the third item, measuring how helpful data from Department of Education are for local efforts to improve the quality of education, is viewed much less favorably by teachers than by administrators. The local educators we interviewed said that the policy or educational context for the state's data reports and requests generally is not well-explained, which makes the requests and reports seem incoherent.

DOE leaders are aware of the importance of solving problems in the area of data collection and use. At the April 24, 2001 Board of Education meeting, Commissioner David Driscoll observed that local educators will not pay close attention to the quality of the data they are submitting to the state unless they believe that the resulting product that the state sends back to them will be useful.

Many people in the state are optimistic about the DOE's Data Mart, which will be on line soon. In Spring, 2001, the Educator Quality group began gathering information on mentoring and induction programs for teachers. In the summer and fall, data collection on educational leaders will occur as part of a larger project on developing educational leaders. Leaders in the Board, the Department, and the field support building more data collection and evaluation capacity at DOE. As one interviewee put it, *"I think it would be useful to convene DOE data people, district data people (from big districts and small ones—they have different issues), PALMS data implementation advisors, and maybe some data experts to figure out what the data management system of the state should be—to help DOE get the data it needs, districts deal with data requests efficiently, and district leaders to figure out which kids are learning and which programs are working, or not."*

Capacity to collect and analyze information on education policy need not be built only within state agencies. In Chicago, the privately funded Consortium on Chicago School Research organization performs evaluation and data collection related to the 1988 education reform law. More information on the Consortium is included in Appendix 1.

Auditing, both of district and school MERA implementation and of the accuracy of the data they send to DOE, remains an issue. The State Auditor's 1997 report on Education Reform implementation found little monitoring of whether schools were actually implementing required changes like increased structured learning time, lack of fiscal controls, lack of data collection, lack of quality assurance, ineffective monitoring, and inadequate guidelines. EMAB also found that many districts fail to follow the protocol for reporting spending of state funds in the areas such as professional development in which they in effect receive categorical grants (i.e. money that is designated to be spent for a specific purpose).

## 7. Enhancing Educator Quality and Education as a Profession

We address issues related to certification, recertification, and professional development for educators together in this section because they are closely related in practice and policy. Under MERA, educators no longer have lifetime certification, and in order to be recertified at five-year intervals they must demonstrate that they have participated in professional development. The DOE's Office of Educator Quality addresses both certification and professional development

functions for the Department, and has also implemented state programs to provide incentives for new entrants to the teaching profession and to enable alternate routes to educator certification.

The DOE role in enhancing the teaching profession is fraught with tension. DOE both regulates entry into the profession and provides funding and services for professional development. The elimination of regional DOE centers in the 1980s seemed to take the department out of the professional development business, but the increased professional development requirements for recertification represents an increased regulatory presence. Although the state has the responsibility for implementing MERA, most funds for professional development go directly to local districts rather than into state programs. This funding pattern has made it hard for DOE to lead in professional development. At the same time, some believe that DOE played a crucial leadership role in legislation passed following the 1998 teacher test controversy. The Department's involvement in the "12 to 62" initiative could serve as a model for how DOE might be more broadly influential in the legislative process.

## Educator Certification and Recertification

Section 41 of MERA (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 38G) gives the Board of Education authority to grant provisional and standard certificates of five years' duration and expands the range of routes to certification. All teachers are to pass competency tests before earning certification. The same section of the law directs the Department of Education to "coordinate the training efforts of districts," "provide orientation programs for support team members," and "devise standardized criteria and forms for a final comprehensive evaluation of each provisional teacher." According to the law, certification fees "shall be established so as to allow the department's bureau of teacher certification to operate at no cost to the commonwealth." However, the revenues from certification fees do not go to the Department of Education, but rather into the Commonwealth's general fund.

Because of the changed roles of principals under Education Reform, Section 90 of MERA directs the Board of Education to "(i) establish new standards for the certification of principals in light of the responsibilities given to principals under this act, and (ii) fashion procedures for recertifying persons serving as principals under these new standards." Both for teachers and principals, certification programs are to be consistent with MERA and the Curriculum Frameworks.

MERA also has provisions designed to change the membership of the Commonwealth's teacher workforce. Section 22 (MGL Ch.15A sec. 19A) created the Attracting Excellence to Teaching program, which provides assistance with repayment of educational loans for students in the top quarter of their college graduating classes who enter teaching after July 1, 1994. Section 83 puts in place early retirement incentives for current school personnel. The Executive Office for Educational Affairs was given responsibility for administering the Attracting Excellence to Teaching program in the 1993 implementation plan, with the other certification and personnel-related functions divided among the Legal Counsel, Professional Standards Development Services, and Certification and Credentialling Services areas of DOE.

Assessments of the MERA provisions in this area and of DOE's capacity to implement them are mixed. Some applaud the alignment of educator preparation with the curriculum frameworks. Others criticize the changes in certification and recertification as confusing, and claim that DOE has not done a good job of administering them. In particular, according to some the first recertification of teachers was done without "quality control" despite the intent of the law. The process of writing the new regulations also struck some respondents as unnecessarily conflictual. When asked to evaluate the extent to which the state provided support for "developing human resources policies to improve staff quality," 43.0% of survey respondents said the state's support in that area had been "poor." Only 11.3% of respondents rated the state's support as "good" or "excellent," and 30.9% chose "fair."

Education Reform puts principals in an especially difficult position. Changes in the process for dismissing principals have left them with less job protection than most teachers, and some believe that this impedes reform. There has been a lot of mobility among principals, and less ability to take risks. At the same time, EMAB's audit findings suggest that principals are no more able to dismiss underperforming teachers than they were before MERA.

## Professional Development

Professional development is critically important for education reform. According to one study of reform implementation in 12 schools in 3 states, professional development for teachers is the key to making policy reforms actually affect educational practice (Goertz, Floden, and O'Day, 1995). In addition to being crucial, state-led professional development is also quite difficult. As Lusi says in her study of reform in Kentucky and Vermont, "Not only is the state trying to change the practice of a large number of practitioners over whom it has little control and no proximity; in addition, it is trying to make this change in a profession where good practice is nearly impossible to clearly specify and in an environment in which it is difficult to predict the effect of its actions" (Lusi, 1997, p. 11).

The approach taken thus far to professional development in MERA exemplifies the "tight-loose" assumption about the state's role in reform. Local districts received state funds for professional development and were expected to use it in ways that supported reform. In practice, many districts have not known how to use the funds effectively, and the state has had insufficient resources to use in guiding them. The Department has begun building capacity in a reorganized "Educator Quality" cluster, and several interviewees spoke very highly of the work this team has begun.

The MERA provisions that concern professional development are related to the evaluation and certification of educational personnel. One of the criteria according to which superintendents are to evaluate the performance of teachers, principals, and administrators (MERA sec.40/MGL Ch.71 sec. 38) is successful implementation by each individual of a professional development plan. Section 41 of MERA (M.G.L. Ch.71 sec.38G) directs the Board of Education to establish policies and guidelines on professional development requirements for maintaining skills and subject matter knowledge in particular certificate areas and says that applicants for renewal of educator certification "shall submit documentation demonstrating their fulfillment of the

professional development requirements established by the board for the certificates they seek to renew."

Not only individuals, but also districts, must implement professional development plans (MERA Sec. 42/MGL Ch.71 sec.38Q). The plans are required to "include training in the teaching of new curriculum frameworks and other skills required for the effective implementation of this act, including participatory decision making, and parent and community involvement." Finally, the "commissioner of education for the commonwealth shall prepare each year a plan for providing statewide assistance in the preparation and implementation of professional development plans," in consultation with the secretary of education and the Higher Education Coordinating Council. To facilitate MERA implementation, local professional development activities ought to be aligned with Education Reform, but the provision of professional development funds to districts on a per-student basis complicates DOE's ability to produce such alignment.

The 1993 implementation plan assigned the task of establishing "guidelines and a statewide plan for professional development and recertification" to the Instructional and Curriculum Services area of DOE.

The draft of the Department of Education's 2001 statewide professional development plan identifies as priorities expanding teachers' knowledge of the subject matter of the school curriculum, extending teachers' familiarity with and use of Massachusetts learning standards in planning curricula; helping teachers understand the strengths and limitations of a range of commonly used instructional programs and pedagogical practices in their disciplines, and raising educator, parent, and community expectations for student achievement. These objectives relate both to general enhancement of teachers' knowledge and skill and to specific improvement in their knowledge specific to Education Reform and other state initiatives.

Many in the state and in the field either do not believe that the state should itself provide professional development or do not believe that it can provide professional development. There is more willingness to accept a state role in the kinds of professional development that relate specifically to MERA. Interviewees also often recommended that DOE play a brokering role, to develop and manage a network of organizations and consultants who would provide assistance to districts and schools. People who have been involved in PALMS see its professional development components as a model for this sort of network. As one interviewee put it:

> *The Department should hire someone, or contract with someone, to spend a year finding the best professional development going on right now, and set it up so that those people are available to district that are ready to use them. In some other states, there are all kinds of resources available to help underperforming districts—networks of universities, colleges, independent professional development providers. That hasn't happened in Massachusetts— it's a huge loss. I'm not sure the Department should provide the professional development, but they should set up the systems that make it possible to do it—bring together networks of higher ed, set up teacher centers, opportunities for sharing of practice.*

Respondents to our survey were critical of the state's support for professional development. In the area of professional development for teachers, 34.7% of respondents rated the state's support

for local efforts as "good" or "excellent." 61.2% rated it as "fair" or "poor," and the remainder of respondents selected "don't know." In the area of professional development for administrators, 21.7% chose "good" or "excellent," 64.4% chose "poor" or "fair," and the remainder chose "don't know." They also expressed concern in an open-ended question about issues such as a perceived focus on "punishing teachers rather than on improving teachers," failure of professional development to keep pace with changing state requirements, and lack of time for professional development given all the other state initiatives to which educators must respond.

As in other areas, the state has been criticized for insufficient oversight of districts' and individuals' professional development plans and districts' use of Education Reform money for professional development, which is one of the four areas in which the state sets a recommended per-pupil expenditure in the foundation budget. According to the state, districts should spend a set amount of money per student ($125 in FY 2000) per enrolled student on professional development, and if they do not they must send an explanation in writing to the Commissioner of Education. Some of the districts audited by EMAB were not spending the required amount of money and were also not sending the required explanation to the Commissioner. According to the Massachusetts Teachers' Association's 2000 study of implementation of the mathematics curriculum framework, only 54% of districts spent the required amount on professional development in FY 1999, and only 28% had budgeted to do so in FY 2000. The MTA study also criticized the DOE for failing to produce statewide professional development plans and for carrying out insufficient informational sessions for districts on the preparation of district-wide professional development plans. According to the MTA, only 6.6% of districts were able to participate in such sessions. The lack of access to the sessions results from the low level of funding for state professional development activities.

The basic problem is that, in addition to uncertainty about its appropriate role in professional development, DOE lacks sufficient staff to monitor and guide district efforts. Interviewees criticized the state for requiring that teachers amass a set number of professional development points in order to be recertified and then not being able to enforce the requirement through anything more than "casual spot-checking." The state is also unable to audit providers to ensure that the courses offered are appropriate for recertification.

Professional development is a key area for capacity building both for practical reasons (its link to the quality of teaching and to the implementation of standards-based reform) and because of the message that an increased state commitment to professional development would send. Right now, according to one of our interviewees, the state's decision to enforce accountability strictly while being lenient about professional development regulations sends a message that teacher education is less relevant to education reform than is accountability. Increased capacity need not be more staff in DOE providing professional development—in fact, it is probably preferable not to go this direction. Instead, the state could build a network of "preferred providers" in which it would serve as a monitor and financial supporter of others' initiatives.

## 8. Ensuring Readiness to Learn Through Early Childhood Education Programs

Section 70 of MERA creates a special commission "to develop a plan to provide pre-kindergarten children ages three to four the opportunity to participate in a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program," including the possibility of charging tuition on a sliding scale, contracting with private providers and Head Start programs, outreach to parents, and full-day kindergartens. According to the 1993 implementation plan, this commission was staffed by DOE's Early Learning Services office, which also established a demonstration project on parent outreach and education. Learning Support Services was to prepare a plan of comprehensive child and family services.

Expansion of early childhood education in the Commonwealth predates MERA. The School Improvement Act of 1985 included the Chapter 188 early childhood program, which was revised and renamed Community Partnerships for Children in FY 1993. In FY 1996, Community Partnerships for Children became the preschool component of MERA. Early childhood education was a major priority of former Board of Education Chair John Silber, who took office in 1996. According to the State Auditor's report on Community Partnerships, program funding grew 247% from 1996 to 1999. Despite the increased state financial commitment, some local respondents to our survey mentioned early childhood education as an area of Education Reform that has not yet been adequately implemented.

One possibility is that despite the increased investment in Community Partnerships for Children, there is a mismatch between community needs and available resources. Children participating in Community Partnerships for Children programs must be preschool-aged children of working parents. The State Auditor's report cites numerous instances in which money intended to be used in CPC was instead used to fund care for infants, toddlers, at-risk children of varying ages, and children whose parents were unemployed. These kinds of care are all as important as care for preschoolers whose parents work, and all could contribute to children's school readiness.

Our interviewees' perceptions of DOE's spending on early care and education were quite mixed. Many of the people we spoke with praised CPC as a flexible program that gets money to where it is needed. However, others saw chaos rather than flexibility, which is consistent with the Auditor's report. The state early childhood education program is a prime example of an area in which funding for programs has far outstripped resources available for administration and evaluation to determine whether the program is being implemented correctly and effectively. Early Learning Services has only 22 staff members. According to the audit, internal controls over the use of CPC money were inadequate, resulting in state funds being spent in inappropriate ways or on children not eligible for CPC services. Many of the Community Partnership Councils did not function in the collaborative way envisioned in the law, with many members not attending meetings and many meetings not documented. CPC's that did not comply with reporting requirements were not sanctioned.

The Auditor notes that DOE has undertaken improvements in the control over this program. Recently, several staff members with research responsibilities joined the Early Childhood cluster of DOE.

## 9. Implementing Choice and Charter Schools

School choice predates Education Reform. However, MERA changed state law on school choice by requiring districts either to participate or to take a public vote not to, and also changed the financial implications of inter-district choice.

Section 61 of MERA (M.G.L. Ch. 76, Section 12B) states that children may attend school in a district in which they do not reside, provided that the district where they wish to attend has space available and has not filed a resolution withdrawing from the Choice Program (voted on by the School Committee) with DOE. The student's sending district loses state aid for that student, unless the district is spending below the foundation level. MERA also directs the Board of Education to establish and maintain a parent information system to facilitate the use of school choice. In the 1993 Implementation Plan, DOE's Information and Outreach services team was given responsibility for administering school choice participation and reimbursement. The Executive Office of Educational Affairs and DOE's Evaluation, Planning, and Research office shared responsibility for the parent information system.

MERA also expanded the range of available public school choices by providing for charter schools in Section 55 (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 89). Initially, the DOE did not run the charter school program. Instead, it was one of the responsibilities of the Executive Office for Educational Affairs. Even after the EOEA was eliminated and charter schools transferred to DOE, the charter school office remained in Boston rather than in Malden with the rest of the department.

Including choice and charters in MERA has affected some local educators' perceptions of the overall reform effort. When students leave their home district's public schools to attend either another district or a charter school, the home district loses money, a difficult consequence for some smaller districts to bear. Choice and charters thus become, to many educators, one more piece of evidence that the state is "out to get" the public schools.

The charter school office has effectively carried out a variety of functions with a limited staff. Staffing of the charter school program only recently increased from 2 to 7 FTE (it also had one consultant in 1995 and one in 1997), has a wide range of responsibilities. It evaluates charter applications, coordinates annual visits to each of the 40 schools, and contracts for re-chartering visits to each school every five years. The annual reviews include organizational capacity, educational programs, and an independent financial audit. On an ongoing basis, the Charter School office works to ensure that charter school boards of trustees are following state regulations and ethics guidelines and that they are negotiating good contracts with their Education Management Organization if they work with one. It also provides assistance with special education programs.

The charter school office contracts with an outside organization to evaluate the performance of the schools under its jurisdiction. Many in the state view the resulting accountability system as a model of what the state can produce, given adequate resources, and believe that the evaluation of all schools should be conducted following the charter school model. Charter schools' evaluations include site visits and consideration of evidence of student learning other than the MCAS.

## 10. Funding Public Education

Sections 32-34 of MERA fundamentally changed the state's role in finance of public education (MGL Chapter 70). In 1993, many educators and political observers were skeptical that the state's elected officials would actually deliver on their promise to spend $1.3 billion over seven years to bring every school district's per-pupil spending up to the foundation level. According to some of our interviewees, this skepticism may even have lessened the sense of urgency educators felt to make the other changes mandated by MERA—they believed that the state would not follow through, based on the precedents set by earlier state school reform initiatives.

Despite these predictions, and aided by an expanding economy, the state fully funded foundation aid to local school districts under MERA. Although some of our interviewees quibbled with the details of the state's funding formula, overall they were impressed that the state has delivered on its promise to fund MERA fully and expressed the belief that state aid to education should be maintained now that all districts have been brought up to foundation level.

However, the local educators we surveyed still singled out funding as a problematic area in their responses to open-ended questions. Their complaints focused more on adequacy of funding than on equity. To many local educators, standards-based reform represents a state mandate that the state should pay for. In some districts, much of the new state aid went to meet rising special education needs (MASS, 1995).

One reason for the persistence of funding problems despite all districts' being at or above the foundation level lies in the determination of the foundation budget. The Foundation Budget Review Commission was intended to review the foundation level annually in order to ensure that it accurately reflected the cost of educating students to meet the state standards. Because former Governor Weld did not reappoint the commission after its first members' terms expired, the foundation budget has not been subject to such review. The foundation level currently reflects only the cost of providing an adequate education in the pre-Education Reform environment. Recently, the legislature appointed its own Foundation Budget Review Commission, which may correct this omission.

## Conclusion

MERA enacted a tremendously ambitious education policy agenda for the Commonwealth. This agenda, which was based on the principle of standards-based reform, fundamentally altered the relationship between state and local education authorities. The state role grew, embracing not only financial support for local districts, but also curriculum, assessment, school and district accountability, data collection, recertification and professional development for educators, early childhood education, school choice and charter schools, and support for local districts implementing new forms of school governance.

In some areas, most notably maintenance of the state's commitment to bring all districts' spending up to the foundation level, it has been a success. In other areas, such as data collection and the implementation of local government reforms, it has fallen short. The state's record in putting MERA into effect provides concrete examples of the political, organizational, and resource issues discussed in Part II.

Political issues, such as disagreement over how to construct the collaborative, shared responsibility system, the extent of DOE's role, and the overall direction and goals of Education Reform, complicated the state's task in setting standards, holding schools and districts accountable, and enacting local governance and management reforms.

Organizational issues, such as communication and coordination among arms of the state government, within DOE itself, and between state and local educational authorities, also limited the state's implementation capacity. The consequences have been clearest for the areas of accountability, data collection and use, and state-level policy making.

Finally, it is difficult to overstate the importance of resources as a constraint on MERA implementation. The law was passed at the point when the Department of Education had its lowest staff level in years. Since 1993, the size of DOE's staff has increased, but slowly and modestly. With more financial resources, which would probably have been spent mostly on human resources (both DOE staff and contracts with people outside DOE), the Department's efforts in all MERA areas might have been more successful.

# IV. Recommendations

Although assessing "state capacity" seems at first to be a straightforward matter of counting the people and resources currently devoted to a task and asking whether or not it is sufficient, our analysis has looked more broadly at goals, organizational elements, and stakeholder perspectives. There is strong evidence that current capacity should be strengthened to carry out even the minimal "tight-loose" conception of the state role under Education Reform. This minimal role would still involve the state in collecting data and holding all schools (not just the lowest-performing ones) accountable for their students' performance. These are two areas in which the state's capacity has been both weak and slow to develop.

This minimal role, however, is not enough. Having set high standards for students, and begun to implement the requirement that all students must pass the tenth-grade mathematics and English language arts MCAS examinations in order to graduate from high school, the state must provide more support and guidance to local education authorities. For most districts, the "tight-loose" assumption that districts would be able on their own to determine how to reach high standards has been disconfirmed by experience. DOE needs increased funds and ability to oversee, coordinate, and support diverse activities.

On the basis of our analysis, we recommend that policy makers consider the following changes:

**1. Increase the funds available for DOE operations, and use the increased funds to improve the agency's capacity in key areas.**

State elected officials have, understandably, held financial assistance to districts to be their major priority. For every dollar of Education Reform funds sent to the Department of Education, approximately $85 has gone to school districts. Many of the Department of Education's difficulties in implementing Education Reform can be traced at least in part to the relative scarcity of funds to pay for oversight and support activities by state employees or by non-state employees working on state contracts.

The state role under MERA requires collection of data, use of data to make policy decisions, and development of effective "feedback loops" that communicate to policy makers whether policy is working. DOE has particularly strong resource needs in the areas of data collection and management, research and evaluation, and assessment. Other important areas of need include staff for the school building assistance program and funds to be used as state matches for federal grants.

**2. Ensure that legislatively mandated programs include adequate funds for DOE to administer and evaluate them.**

The legislature often mandates new programs without setting aside funds for program administration and evaluation. This leaves DOE with the unenviable choice of either administering state-funded programs with federally funded staff, which can leave the Commonwealth vulnerable to federal audit exceptions, or offering insufficient program

assistance and oversight. A concrete way of easing the above-mentioned resources shortfall would be for the legislature to specify that a given percentage of program funds be used for legitimate administrative costs—perhaps 5% for administration and 3% for evaluation. In general, whenever state government creates a new grant program or imposes a new responsibility or reporting requirement on the DOE or local school districts, it should specify a source of funding for administrative support, including resources for facilitation, oversight, and evaluation of the program.

### 3. Allow overhead from DOE's Federal grants to go to DOE rather than the General Fund.

Another area in which DOE seems to be gaining administrative burdens without commensurate administrative resources is in the area of Federal grants. Primary administrative responsibility for these grants goes to the Department, while the overhead funds go to the Commonwealth's General Fund. The state should consider allowing the overhead components of federal grants to remain with DOE rather than reverting to the state general fund. Other sources of funds include the revenues from educator certification fees, which also currently go to the General Fund rather than Department administrative costs.

### 4. Salaries for DOE staff should be increased, in order to attract greater numbers of experienced educators to work in the agency.

DOE is unable to compete with either large school districts or the private sector in terms of salaries offered for mid- to senior-level staff. This has a number of harmful impacts on capacity, including reducing the pool of applicants for staff positions, which reduces expertise and greatly extends the time required for conducting searches for state staff. This in turn contributes to a situation where hiring state staff is seen as so difficult and time-consuming that it is actively avoided, and therefore to an increased dependence on contract employees. Contract employees can make higher salaries, but they work without benefits, and as a result they turn over more frequently than state staff, and they generally take their expertise with them when they leave. In some important cases—a state bilingual education director was mentioned as an example—DOE has been unable to fill positions at all, due to limited pools of experts in the field and a combination of greater responsibilities and lower pay at the Department.

This is a difficult issue to resolve, given that the salary ranges for DOE are generally the same as for all state agencies. DOE has creatively used contracted employees, sabbatical teachers, and other mechanisms to address this shortcoming, but the capacity costs of these practices cannot be underestimated. Given the ambitious combination of support and regulatory roles required of DOE by MERA, an inability to hire sufficient numbers of experienced educators is a significant limitation.

## 5. Increase involvement of and communication with educators in the field in implementation of Education Reform.

The DOE has frequently been criticized for taking an overly regulatory stance towards local schools and districts, and for not adequately understanding the needs of and demands on educators in the field. Policy implementation in an environment where power is divided among federal, state, and local authorities depends upon cooperation at least as much as it does on legal and regulatory compliance. The entire state government needs to change the tone of its interactions with educators in the field and work toward a more collaborative relationship. DOE has already begun to take some initiative in this area. Overall, the relationship between state authorities and the field needs to become less adversarial. From the governor, the legislature, the Board, the Department, and the various education associations, there needs to be some sort of common attempt to say that Education Reform is a worthy goal, that we have much to celebrate, that we are going to get there, and that we will move forward together.

## 6. Where appropriate, use resources and organizations outside of DOE to expand state capacity.

Not all capacity issues need to be addressed by adding DOE staff. Partnerships and alliances with other public and private entities should also be considered. However, it is also important to recognize the limitations of contracting out as a means of policy implementation. One DOE senior staff member, who has worked extensively with contractors, cautioned in an interview that because contractors are not necessarily familiar with the Massachusetts policy environment, their work sometimes needs to be re-done or tailored by DOE staff. As Elmore, Abelmann, and Fuhrman say of student assessment, "While contracting out allows states to run performance-based systems relatively effectively, it also contributes to the problem…of a separation between technical expertise about assessment and evaluation and the policy makers and high-level administrators who are responsible for the systems" (1996, p. 95).

With that caveat, there are some areas where DOE lacks capacity in which there is likely to be relevant expertise elsewhere. For some areas, such as school building assistance and school and district auditing, that expertise may come from other state agencies.

For other areas, assistance may come from outside of state agencies. DOE may be able to increase its capacity in areas like evaluation and professional development by bringing together others in the state—educators, professional development providers, consultants, and higher education—to work on specific projects where there is need. DOE is currently moving in this direction with its development of a network of "preferred providers" in professional development.

In the area of technical assistance, DOE might build a similar network to provide technical assistance to schools identified as underperforming. In 1995, Texas moved the technical assistance function out of its state education agency into a set of 20 existing regional assistance centers, funded by a mix of federal, state, and local sources (Johnston, 1999). In Massachusetts, DOE might establish a list of preferred providers in these areas and enter into contract relationships with them to provide services that DOE cannot.

However, it is not the case that such a network can be built with no increase in DOE financial, human, or technological resources. DOE needs such resources to stimulate, organize, and manage participation in the network and to monitor the quality of participants' work. DOE employees would be needed to ensure that service providers carry out appropriate services and to safeguard the state's interests, and continued investment in data collection and information technology networks would be needed in order to enable communication within the network and evaluation of programs and policies.

## 7. Resolve uncertainty over responsibility for accountability, monitoring, and oversight.

Over the past several months, uncertainty over the division of authority between the DOE and the new accountability board in the Governor's Office has been an obstacle to capacity-building at DOE. Statewide, because understanding of goals is a key element of capacity, the lack of clarity over accountability goals and functions has undermined capacity. In addition to establishing a clear sense of which roles will be played by the Governor's Office and which by the DOE, it is also necessary to determine how both entities' work fits with that of the State Auditor and the Education Reform Review Commission. Finally, lessons may be learned in the area of district accountability by comparing the different accountability methods used to evaluate charter schools and regular public schools.

## 8. Maintain and enhance DOE's capacity to play a regulatory role.

Although regulatory compliance is not a popular function of DOE, it is a key part of its work as a state agency. Emphasis on DOE as a supporter or facilitator of improved teaching and learning must be seen as complementing rather than supplanting its role as the enforcer of federal and state regulations. Although networks outside the agency can assist in the support and facilitating functions and in service delivery, legal compliance remains the DOE's legal responsibility as a state agency.

## 9. Expand the use of sampling in data collection and program evaluation.

Closely monitoring the activities of 371 districts and 1,874 schools is a daunting task, but in many cases a sampling strategy can deliver representative data at lower capacity costs than collecting data from all districts and/or schools. DOE already uses this type of sampling approach in its Coordinated Review Program, and there may be numerous other data collection areas in which a sampling, rather than a census, approach should be considered. Adequate data collection and analysis through a sampling strategy would probably still require additional DOE capacity, but less than if the whole state were to be audited each year.

## 10. Improve coordination and communication within DOE.

Many interviewees (inside and outside DOE) talked about their impression that the work of various DOE clusters and staff members is not well coordinated, both because there isn't a chief operating officer or staff member with similar knowledge of and authority over which cluster is doing which tasks and because communication among clusters is largely ad hoc. Since we began our interviews, the Commissioner has embarked upon a reorganization that addresses one of these issues by adding a chief operating officer to the organizational chart. This reorganization, and subsequent ones, may also make cross-cluster communication and collaborations more routine.

## 11. Consider regional or at least western and southeastern Massachusetts field offices.

At present, all of DOE, including the Program Quality Assurance staff, whose areas of responsibility are geographically defined, are based in Malden. The old regional structure of DOE was eliminated between 1988 and 1991, as an effort to cut costs, to respond to charges that the regional offices were overly regulatory in their interactions with schools and districts, and to unify interpretations of laws and regulations under the Commissioner's authority.

The risk in reinstating some level of regional structure for DOE is that the problems of the old system would also be reinstated. The benefit would be a greater sense of connection to the agency for school and district staff in the parts of the state that are the furthest from the Boston area. As our survey suggests, educators who have more regular contact with DOE have more positive impressions of Education Reform. Creating regional offices would also make it easier for DOE staff to spend more time in schools and districts.

State policy makers should go beyond framing the issue as a choice between maintaining centralization and instituting decentralization. Regionally based staff need not become disconnected from Malden, but could instead use information technology for internal and external communication and coordination.

## 12. Conduct additional research.

The research capacity of the state, inside and outside DOE, needs to be built up, either through internal research staff or through additional resources for contracted research. One potential model is the Consortium on Chicago School Research, described in Appendix 1. Areas of needed research include the following:
- How are districts spending their MERA funds?
- What would a data management system optimally look like, based on the data-use needs of both the Department and local educators?
- What are the best practices in professional development now, and how could a provider network be organized to bring these practices into classrooms across the state?
- Evaluation of early childhood programs and spending—what's the best use of state funds?
- Is there a fiscal crisis coming, due to the large number of current school building projects, that will drain instructional resources in the future?

\* \* \*

When MERA was passed in 1993, its proponents had a vision of a future in which all Massachusetts children would have equal educational opportunities and would be able to meet world-class academic standards. The path to that future has proved long and challenging. Several of the state policy makers we met with described Education Reform implementation as having recently reached "the hard part," or as passing through "adolescence." They remained hopeful, however, that the challenges of Education Reform can be surmounted. We hope that the analysis and recommendations we have presented in this paper will be used constructively to support the Commonwealth in meeting these challenges.

# Appendix 1
# Information About Programs in Other States

## 1. The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Education Reform Act

In 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court declared in *Rose v. Council for Better Education* that the state's entire system of public education was unconstitutional. The Court ordered the state legislature to create a new system that would deliver an adequate education for every child in the state, with "adequate" defined in terms of educational standards.

Spurred by the court order, the Kentucky General Assembly passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) the following year. KERA included funding increases for public education coupled with systemic school reform. The guiding philosophy behind the reform was that schools should be freed from excessive regulation and oversight but held accountable for results (Lusi, 1997, p. 29). The KERA was one of the models for the Massachusetts Education Reform Act.

Despite the similarity in philosophy between the two reform packages, the KERA had different consequences for the capacity of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) than the MERA has had for the Massachusetts Department of Education. The KDE was completely reorganized in the year following KERA, with no guarantees that staff would be able to remain employed with the agency. All of the KDE's staff positions were terminated as of June 30, 1991, and the reorganized department opened on July 1, 1991. Fewer than 20% of deputy and associate commissioners and division directors from the old KDE continued their employment in the new one; however, just over 80% of the civil service employees stayed on in new positions (Lusi, 1997, p. 31). The new KDE had 40 fewer staff positions than the old one (Van Meter, 1992).

Even with this cut in positions, KDE remains larger than the Massachusetts DOE both in terms of absolute number of employees and relative to the total size of the state's public school system. Massachusetts has 976,000 students, 371 districts, 1,874 schools, 71,900 teachers, and 405 FTE staff in the Department of Education. In contrast, Kentucky has 637,000 students, 176 districts, 1,346 schools, 39,800 teachers, and 865 FTE Department of Education staff. With double the number of FTE's in the state education agency serving smaller numbers of students, districts, schools, and teachers, the KDE seems to have greater internal resources than the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Apart from staffing levels, the major organizational difference between the two agencies is that unlike the Massachusetts Department of Education, the reorganized KDE includes regional centers with responsibilities in professional development, school and district consolidated planning, technical assistance, program design and development, and local capacity building. The Kentucky regional centers assist schools, districts, and consortia in planning professional development; identify and remediate gaps in professional development, in collaboration with partners; provide technical assistance in development, evaluation, and updating of school and district transformation plans; assist districts and schools in standards-based curriculum development; identify appropriate and useful resources for technical assistance; and supply technical information for implementing instructional strategies; assist in design and development of KDE curriculum materials; ensure involvement of local educators in KDE initiatives; and provide leadership training (KDE, 2001).

Another difference that affects staff capacity is that the KDE may go outside normal state hiring guidelines for up to 50% of its employees below the Division Director level. KDE does this through Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with local school districts and the Ohio Valley Education Cooperative. When KDE wants to "borrow" a district employee for two or three years, as for the Highly Skilled Educators program (see description of the Highly Skilled Educators program below), it enters into an MOA with the district and pays the employee's regular district salary. When KDE wishes to hire a staff member who is not a district employee, it arranges to have the Ohio Valley Education Cooperative hire the person, and then enters into the same sort of MOA. This system has the positive effect of increasing the state's flexibility in hiring experienced educators and other desirable personnel; however, it also is no faster than the usual state process and creates inequities within KDE and between KDE and other agencies.

## 2. Comparing SEA's

Although comparing the size of state education agencies (SEAs) sounds as if it should be a simple matter of getting figures on each state's SEA budget, number of FTE's, and total enrollment, in truth the comparison is much more complicated. In different states, SEA's have different combinations of responsibilities, including administration of various federal programs, complicating comparative analysis. After contacting organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, and *Education Week*, we also learned that there is currently no source of comprehensive basic data on budgets and FTE's. Despite the lack of comparable data, a few generalizations can be made:

• SEA budgets and staff began to decrease in the 1980s and 1990s, ironically as many state boards and legislatures were taking the lead in standards-based reform. According to *Education Week*, at least 27 SEAs had fewer employees in 1998 than they had had in 1980 (Johnston, 1999). Massachusetts fits this trend, with most of the loss of SEA staff occurring during the 1980s. In 1980, the DOE had 990 employees. In 1991, it had 452. More state-funded (374) than federally-funded (164) positions were lost. As a result, the DOE went from having 63% of its FTEs state-funded to having 55% state-funded. This shift matters, because the state has more flexibility in how it deploys state-funded employees to implement state policy initiatives.

• Although federal sources make up only about 7% of the nation's total education spending, federal dollars are an important source of support for SEAs. According to a 1994 report by the U.S. General Accounting Office, the average SEA gets 41% of its funding and 43% of its FTEs from federal programs. In any given state, the percentage of staff and funding from federal sources varies according to which federal programs the SEA administers, from about 10% to about 80% (GAO, 1994). In Massachusetts, 45% of DOE FTEs are federally funded.

• More state spending does not necessarily mean more state bureaucracy. SEAs pass through nearly all of the federal and state funds they receive to local schools and districts, with very little held at the state level for administration of programs. In 1994, SEAs passed through 95% of the federal money and 99% of the state money they received (GAO). This pattern holds true for the Massachusetts DOE and Education Reform funds.

## 3. The Rhode Island Department of Education's School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Program

In the 1997-1998 school year, Rhode Island began a new comprehensive accountability system for schools. Like Massachusetts, Rhode Island sets improvement targets for schools and has the power to intervene in failing schools. Despite this broad similarity, however, Rhode Island's School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Program (SALT) is quite different from the approach to accountability taken for most public schools in Massachusetts.

SALT is intended to provide support to local schools as they conduct self-studies of their improvement plans. Each school undertakes the SALT process every five years. The process consists of school-level development of an Improvement Plan, with involvement by parents, teachers, and community members, school reporting to the local community, parents, and teachers, a school visit by state authorities, and state support and intervention. The SALT process is more like the Massachusetts charter school evaluation process than like the regular accountability process in Massachusetts, because it involves every school rather than only the ones identified as under-performing on the basis of their test scores. To support the local parts of the SALT process, guides have been developed by Department of Education staff to assist in the process.

At the state level, SALT is staffed by fourteen people: a Director, a Program Coordinator, a Coordinator for Training, an Assistant Trainer, a Logistics Administrator, three consultants that edit visit reports and maintain the SALT website, and six educators on two-year Fellowships from school districts. Each Fellowship last for two years, and each Fellow is responsible for six visits annually. The state site visit teams consist of members of the community and local school staff and faculty. There is an application and interview process for all team members. Each site visit lasts four days and the team size is dependent on the size of the school.

Statewide, Rhode Island has about 300 schools, compared with about 1,900 in Massachusetts (the Rhode Island figure is from Education Week's *Quality Counts*; the Massachusetts figure is a revised number provided by a DOE employee), which means that a school accountability apparatus with the same functions in Massachusetts as in Rhode Island would need to be about six times larger than Rhode Island's—about 84 people.

## 4. The Kentucky Department of Education's Highly Skilled Educators Program

In Kentucky, schools that are identified as in need of assistance based on their assessment scores receive help from teachers and administrators under the Department of Education's Highly Skilled Educators Program.

In the early years of Kentucky Education Reform Act implementation, the Distinguished Educators Program (as it was then known) was badly understaffed because of a budget cut made by the state legislature. As a result of the cut, 23 Distinguished Educators served 150 schools, which had the discretion to choose not to participate in the program (Elmore, Abelmann, and Fuhrman, p. 83). Each Distinguished Educator worked with multiple schools and thus could not pay full attention to any one of them (Calvert, Gaus, and Ruscoe, 2000).

This year, the program's total budget for operations and personnel is $23 million, and it serves 61 schools. The Highly Skilled Educators program is a branch of the Division of School Improvement, which in turn is part of the Office of Leadership and School Improvement. The program is staffed by a Branch Manager, a consultant, and an administrative assistant. There are 63 Highly Skilled Educators, district-based personnel who work for the Department of Education temporarily under Memoranda of Agreement with their home districts (see above description of the Kentucky Department of Education). State funds pay the Highly Skilled Educators' salaries, which are not subject to the regular state scale because of the Memoranda of Agreement.

## 5. The Consortium on Chicago School Research, Chicago, IL

In 1988, the Illinois state legislature passed a law that decentralized much of the authority over Chicago's public schools to Local School Councils at each school. The Chicago Public Schools did not have the capacity to evaluate the implementation and effects of decentralization itself, and so asked Professor Anthony S. Bryk of the University of Chicago to convene a research collaboration between several grass-roots education reform advocacy organizations and researchers at Chicago area universities. The Consortium on Chicago School Research provides a model both of a research and data-gathering organization and of collaboration between public education authorities, community groups, foundations, and higher education.

The Consortium produces reports and conducts briefings, with the goal of advancing discussion of school improvement and school reform. Its work has five general audiences: key decision makers in the school system, city, and state; business leaders, education advocacy leaders and organizations, and community organizations; members of the local school communities; the people of greater Chicago; and the national policy and research community. Research activities include a biannual survey of students, teachers, and principals. Students are asked about their experiences in school, their attitudes about school, and the activities they undertake in their schools. Principals and teachers are asked about instruction, professional development, and their schools' characteristics as workplaces. The Consortium also maintains an archive of data provided by the Chicago Public Schools, including test scores and other information on individual students, which can be matched with their survey responses. The archive also includes demographic, certification, and educational preparation information on the city's teachers, as well as data on the communities in which the schools are located.

Examples of recent Consortium reports include *Instruction and Achievement in Chicago Elementary Schools*, *Authentic Intellectual Work and Standardized Tests: Conflict or Co-Existence?*, *School Instructional Program Coherence: Benefits and Challenges*, and an updated report on the effects of ending social promotion. These may be downloaded from the Consortium's website: http://www.consortium-chicago.org.

The Consortium's Steering Committee includes representatives from the Chicago Board of Education, the Chicago Public Schools' Chief Executive Officer and Accountability Office, as well as from the Chicago Academic Advisory

Council, the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools office, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, the Chicago Principals and Administrators' Association, the Chicago Teachers' Union, Leadership for Quality Education, Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform, Designs for Change, Northeastern Illinois University, Northwestern University, Chicago State University, Roosevelt University, DePaul University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and National-Louis University. The Constituent Advisory Board involves educational agency leaders, legislators, aldermen, foundation representatives, principals, teachers, other school staff, and local school council members.

In addition to its seven directors, five of whom are also university faculty, the Consortium has a large staff. The website lists 28 full and part-time employees, including three postdoctoral fellows (two from the Spencer Foundation's postdoctoral program), four research assistants (two part-time), a microsystems support specialist, a psychometrician, a project coordinator, a survey coordinator, a director of fieldwork, and a project fieldwork and data coordinator.

The Consortium's core budget of approximately $1.25 million per year comes entirely from foundation grants, although early on it received a small amount of money from the Illinois State Department of Education. Its three main funders are the Joyce Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation.

## 6. The Connecticut State Department of Education's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program

In 1986, the Connecticut General Assembly passed the Education Enhancement Act. The goal of the Act was to enhance the professional status and skills of the state's teaching force, by raising salaries, requiring teachers to participate in continuing education, replacing lifetime certification with recertification every five years, and by requiring new teachers to demonstrate mastery of academic skills, content, and pedagogy through the Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST).

BEST consists of an assessment component and a support component. The support activities include school-based mentors for new teachers, clinics for beginning teachers, and content-focused support seminars led by experienced teachers. The assessment component consists of a content-specific teaching portfolio for second-year teachers.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)'s capacity to develop and operate the BEST program was the result of efforts to build both the agency's internal capacity in the areas of research, evaluation, and assessment and its external capacity through partnerships with educators in the field and with agencies in other states through the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (Fisk, 1998).

The BEST Director, Catherine W. Fisk, estimates that typical development costs for a system like BEST would be slightly more than $1 million, spread over three years, per content area portfolio. The major component of this cost is salary and benefits for 3.5 FTE employees in the state education agency. According to Fisk, a state education agency could conceivably save money by adopting or adapting an existing portfolio assessment from another state, although there would still be costs associated with validation and standard setting. Following development of the system, implementation costs would be about $3.6 million per year (Fisk, 1997, pp. 12-15).

Currently, BEST is managed by 9 FTE staff at the CSDE (3.5 in assessment development, validation, and program evaluation, plus 5.5 in operations) plus 8 FTE teachers-in-residence at CSDE, whose role is to develop and implement content-specific portfolio assessment and training for mentors, scorers, and beginning teachers.

BEST also involves 3.1 FTE staff at the state's six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs). The RESCs, which are similar to the regional collaboratives in Massachusetts, were established outside of state government by cooperating local boards of education during the 1960s and ultimately given official recognition by the state government. RESCs are governed by boards representing each of their participating boards of education, and their funding comes from a mixture of public and private sources. The RESC staff involved in BEST provide district/facilitator support, general district support, regional support, training, and program monitoring (RESC Field Staff Responsibilities, 2000). One of the RESCs, EASTCONN, currently serves as the central contractor for BEST.

Its role is to implement and coordinate statewide training, portfolios, and budget matters. In 2000-01, EASTCONN budgeted for 471 training sessions, including 285 for new teachers.

For FY 2000-01, BEST's operating budget is approximately $3.5 million. This figure does not include state agency staff and teachers-in-residence, but does include contractor staffing, payments to districts, and assessment scoring. The budget assumes that 3500 first year teachers and 2800 second year teachers will be served by 3500 mentors and 930 assessors. There will be 215 beginning teacher clinics and seminars, 26 initial mentor training sessions, 44 update mentor training sessions, and 16 assessor training sessions. Beginning teachers participate for 2 or 3 years. Because the state is currently in the last stages of portfolio development and validation, staffing and budget will decrease slightly starting in FY 2002-03.

# Appendix 2
# Analysis of Survey Data:
# State Capacity to Perform Education Reform Responsibilities

## Introduction

The goal of the survey portion of this study is to examine the capacity of the Commonwealth from the point of view of the "end users"—in this case, the local educational personnel who are the ground-level implementers of education reform. Therefore, in addition to document analysis and state-level stakeholder interviews, local educational leaders' assessments of whether or not the Commonwealth has sufficient capacity to implement MERA were also examined through the use of survey research. For the purposes of this study, local educational leaders were defined as superintendents (or a representative from a central district office), principals/assistant principals, and teachers. Nearly identical surveys[3] were sent to a sample representing each of these key local stakeholder groups throughout the Commonwealth.

The following report briefly summarizes the findings from this survey research. Most of the analyses are descriptive in nature, with a few analysis (mainly in the form of factor analysis and simple correlations) of relationships among variables being conducted, along with some mean comparisons to see if there were differences between the three groups – superintendents, principals, and teachers – targeted for this survey research. If you are interested in details of the analysis, please contact Joseph Berger of the Center for Education Policy at jbberger@educ.umass.edu.

## Description of Sample

Survey instruments used in this study added to the overall data collection on goals, organizational elements, and perspectives. In the area of *goals*, respondents were asked to share their impressions of the state's goals under Education Reform and how well those goals fit with local and school-level initiatives. The survey also includes opportunities for respondents to rank the importance of the ten main Education Reform goals we have identified. In the area of *organizational elements*, local educators were asked to comment on the data they share with the Department of Education and the uses the Department makes of that data. They were also asked about which parts of the Department they interact with most regularly and ask them to evaluate their interactions. Finally, in the area of *perspectives*, local educators' sense of the appropriate balance between state and local roles in education policy was investigated.

Surveys were sent out to three groups of local educators – superintendents, principals, and teachers. The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Principals, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers all supported the survey component of this project by urging their members to participate and by sharing mailing lists.

We sent surveys to all members of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. For principals and teachers, we first developed a representative sample of 150 school districts, based on district size, DOE's classification of the community type, geographic region, vocational-technical schools, involvement with the *McDuffy* suit, amount of Chapter 70 aid received, and whether or not the district's School Committee publicly supported the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' resolution to eliminate MCAS as a graduation requirement. We drew our samples of principals and teachers from this sample of 150 districts.

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[3] Wording was changed on some items to reflect the different levels of responsibility (district, school or classroom) of the targeted respondents. See Appendix 4 for copies of surveys.

For principals, we sent surveys to a mix of high school, middle school, and elementary school principals. We received a mailing list from the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA) and sent surveys to 117 high school and 86 middle school principals in our selected districts. For elementary school principals, we generated a mailing list for our selected districts from a list purchased from Market Data Retrieval, a division of Dun & Bradstreet, and sent out surveys to 331 principals.

For teachers, we received mailing lists from the Massachusetts Teachers' Association and the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers for our 150 selected districts. For most districts, we sent out surveys to 6 randomly selected teachers, distributed 2 each in high school, middle school, and elementary school. In the larger, urban districts we over-sampled, mailing 20 surveys to Springfield, Worcester, and Lawrence teachers, and 60 surveys to Boston teachers.

Superintendents had a response rate of 41% (113 of 277 surveys returned). 534 surveys were sent to principals and 167 of them were returned in time for data analysis, resulting in a return rate of 31%. Teachers had the lowest response rate; 98 out of 616, or 16%, were returned.

## Data Analysis

Several statistical techniques were used to analyze the survey data. The experience items were factor analyzed to examine and identify underlying patterns of commonality among the items. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted using an orthogonal varimax rotation given that there was no a priori assumption of strong inter-correlations among the underlying factors. The factors were identified using a 0.30 cut-off score for the factor loadings and the factors were confirmed through the use of Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis.

Descriptive statistics - frequencies and means - were used to provide an overview of how the superintendents, principals, and teachers collectively responded to the items on the survey. In addition, independent samples t-tests were used to identify differences in response patterns among the three groups of local educators. Finally, correlational analysis was also used to examine relationships among the variables.

## Descriptive Analysis

The following sub-sections of the report provide summaries of how district and school-level personnel perceive issues related to the state's capacity to implement various components of educational reform. The main text of this report provides a narrative summary of the results of the statistical analyses used to examine the data.

# Overview of Experiences

In this section of the survey, a sample of superintendents, principals, and teachers were asked to respond to a series of questions about the ways in which they have experienced educational reform. More specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed[4] with twenty statements regarding various aspects of their own experiences with the implementation of educational reform in the Commonwealth.

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[4] Measured by a four point indicator with responses that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree

The first step in the analysis was to examine the data to see if there were common underlying patterns of response to various items[5]. Five groups of items were identified as having common patterns of response among survey respondents. The common groups of items were labeled as follows:

1) Local Impact
2) Communication of Goals
3) Local Control
4) Use of Data
5) State Personnel

The following paragraphs provide a descriptive overview of how survey respondents perceive their own experiences in each of these five areas.

## Local Impact

Six items focused on the ways in which respondents perceived that educational reform has had an impact on local districts and schools in the areas of instructional quality, curricular quality, professional development, local priorities, and overall district functioning. Table 1 displays the patterns of responses for each of these six items.

**Table 1 – Response Patterns for Items Measuring Experience with Local Impact of Education Reform.**

| Type of Experience | Strongly[6] Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education reform has had a positive impact on my district | 21.2% | 43.9% | 28.8% | 3.4% |
| Education reform has had a positive impact on my school | 24.9% | 42.7% | 27.4% | 2.8% |
| Education reform has improved the quality of instruction in my school/district | 13.1% | 49.7% | 25.6% | 6.9% |
| Education reform has improved the quality of curriculum in my school/district | 17.2% | 52.4% | 19.7% | 7.2% |
| Education reform has improved the quality of professional development in my school/district | 21.7% | 51.3% | 17.5% | 6.4% |
| Education reform fits well with my district/school's other priorities | 9.8% | 57.9% | 21.1% | 5.6% |

The findings reported in Table 1 suggest that survey respondents do not generally believe that educational reform has had a positive impact on local districts and schools. "Disagree" was the most common response category for each of the six items and over 60% of the respondents indicated that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the six statements that focused on ways in which they had experienced positive local impact in their districts and schools as a result of educational reform. At the other end of the spectrum, less than ten percent of all respondents strongly agreed that educational reform had a positive impact on any of the six areas listed above.

There were significant differences in the pattern of responses between administrators and teachers.[7] While the responses for superintendents and principals were nearly identical, both groups were quite different in their patterns of responses than were teachers. The administrators (superintendents and principals) were more likely to respond

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[5] These patterns were identified through the use of exploratory factor analysis and confirmed through reliability analysis.

[6] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.

[7] Differences among the three groups of respondents – superintendents, principals, and teachers – were investigated through the use of independent samples t-tests.

favorably to each of the six items than were teachers. These differences were large and highly statistically significant. In fact, the average score for each of the six items is almost fifteen percent higher per item for administrators than for teachers.

## Communication of Goals

Four items on the survey focused on how respondents experienced the communication of goals relating to education reform. Table 2 presents the responses for these items.

**Table 2 - Response Patterns for Items Measuring Experience with Communication of Goals**

| Type of Experience | Strongly[8] Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to local school districts | 9.7% | 25.8% | 50.4% | 11.6% |
| State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to the general public | 17.5% | 46.8% | 30.7% | 2.8% |
| The state's priorities under Education Reform are clear | 6.7% | 23.7% | 50.0% | 18.7% |
| I understand the goals of the Education Reform Act | 0.6% | 3.3% | 41.7% | 54.2% |

Respondents had differing views on how well the goals of educational reform have been communicated at various levels. In general, educational professionals at the district and school levels indicate that the goals and priorities of educational reform have been communicated well and been understood in districts and schools. At the personal level, respondents feel that they understand the goals of the Education Reform Act; with approximately 96% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they understand these goals. However, these same individuals are slightly less sure that the goals have been clearly prioritized. Just over two-thirds of the respondents agree or strongly agree that the priorities are clear and almost one-quarter of the respondents disagree that priorities are clear. Just over sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they have been well informed by state policy makers about the goals of educational reform. In contrast, almost 65% of the respondents believe that state policy-makers have not done a good job of communicating these goals to the general public.

As was the case for the first group of items measuring experiences relating to local impact, the responses to the communication of goals items were nearly identical for administrators as a whole; but significantly different between administrators and teachers. Once again, administrators were about 15% more likely than were teachers to strongly agree or agree that the goals and priorities of educational reform have been well communicated by state policy-makers and understood at local levels.

## Local Control

The next set of items measuring perceived experiences with education reform focus on the ways in which education reform has impacted issues associated with local control. Table 3 presents a summary of how respondents replied to these four items.

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[8] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.

## Table 3 - Response Patterns for Items Measuring Experience with Issues of Local Control

| Type of Experience | Strongly[9] Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education Reform has crowded out other initiatives I think are more important | 4.8% | 43.8% | 29.1% | 16.9% |
| Under Education Reform, the state has too much power | 3.4% | 29.6% | 34.8% | 25.9% |
| The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of districts in implementing the Education Reform Act | 12.0% | 54.3% | 20.3% | 9.2% |
| The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of schools in implementing the Education Reform Act | 10.1% | 51.0% | 24.3% | 9.7% |

In general, respondents indicated that they have not had favorable impressions of the ways in which education reform has impacted local control of districts and schools. Approximately 60% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the state has too much power under the auspices of the Education Reform Act. Additionally, over 60% of respondents indicated that they thought that the state has had unreasonable expectations regarding the roles of districts and schools in implementing education reform. It is interesting to note that respondents were fairly evenly divided as to whether education reform has crowded out other important initiatives.

Like the previous two groups of experiential items, administrators were quite homogenous in their responses to these items and generally had a more favorable impression of how education reform has impacted local control than did teachers.

## Use of Data

Three items in this section of the survey focused on the ways in which the state collects and uses data. Table 4 summarizes the responses to the three items that focused on respondents' experience with the collection and use of data under education reform.

## Table 4 - Response Patterns for Items Measuring Experience with Use of Data

| Type of Experience | Strongly[10] Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Department of Education collects appropriate data from schools | 11.2% | 38.5% | 38.1% | 3.6% |
| The Department of Education uses these data appropriately | 16.1% | 39.4% | 20.4% | 1.8% |
| The data my district gets from the Department of Education are helpful in our efforts to improve the quality of education | 11.5% | 34.6% | 38.0% | 3.6% |

Responses indicate that district and school personnel tend to disagree that the Department of Education is appropriately collecting and using data in ways that are helpful to districts and schools. However, most of the

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[9] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.
[10] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.

responses fall in the middle range of response categories, so it does not appear that there are strong concerns in this area. The first two items were not asked of teachers, but the third item, measuring how helpful data from Department of Education are for local efforts to improve the quality of education, is viewed much less favorably by teachers than by administrators. Administrators were 20% more likely to respond more favorably to this item than were teachers. This may indicate a difference in how much access teachers have to data that is sent from the Department of Education to the districts.

## State Personnel

The remaining questions in this section on experiences with education reform focus on how the respondents reported their perceptions of their interactions with state personnel. Table 5 presents the summary of the responses to the three questions that focus on the human resource capacity of the Department of Education as it relates to the implementation of educational reform.

**Table 5 - Response Patterns for Items Measuring Experience with State Personnel**

| Type of Experience | Strongly[11] Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Education staff members have the qualifications and experiences they need to provide useful support to schools and districts | 21.4% | 27.8% | 17.5% | 0.6% |
| The Department of Education seems to have enough staff to carry out its responsibilities | 28.2% | 30.7% | 12.8% | 3.9% |
| When I or my staff have a question about Education Reform, the Department of Education is helpful | 12.4% | 30.3% | 35.1% | 3.9% |

The majority of respondents who answered these items had an unfavorable impression about the qualifications and experiences of Department of Education personnel. The respondents were even less likely to indicate that they believed that the Department of Education has enough personnel to carry out its responsibilities. Clearly, administrators and teachers feel that the Department of Education is under-prepared and under-staffed to be able to effectively implement education reform. The responses were less critical of the helpfulness of the Department of Education when answering questions about education reform. However, less than four percent of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with any of these thee statements; indicating that satisfaction with the human resource of Department of Education to be moderate at best. It is also worth noting that more individuals responded with an "I don't know" to these three items than to any of the other twenty experience-oriented items. Between 20% and 34% of respondents indicated that they didn't know how to respond to any one of these three items. This may indicate that many district and school-level personnel have not had enough contact with the Department of Education to adequately judge the human resource capacity of that department.

Teachers were much more likely than administrators to indicate that they did not know how to answer these questions. However, administrators were almost twice as likely as teachers to give a favorable response to these items. Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference between the average response of superintendents and to the average response of principals to the question about the experiences and qualifications of Department of Education personnel. Superintendents were more likely to have a favorable impression of the experience and qualifications of Department of Education personnel.

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[11] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.

# Support for Education Reform

Eight items on the survey focused on the extent to which respondents felt that the state provided support for the implementation of a variety of education reform related activities. Table 6 summarizes the responses to the questions about support for education reform.

## Table 6 – Summary of Responses to Support for Education Reform Items

| Type of Support | Poor[12] | Fair | Good | Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aligning curriculum with the state's frameworks | 20.5% | 27.1% | 30.9% | 5.9% |
| Providing support for students who score poorly on MCAS | 29.2% | 37.5% | 24.2% | 5.6% |
| Interpreting MCAS results | 21.1% | 35.6% | 30.6% | 9.2% |
| Developing human resource policies to improve staff quality | 43.0% | 30.9% | 9.6% | 1.7% |
| Professional development for teachers | 23.1% | 38.1% | 30.3% | 4.2% |
| Professional development for administrators | 32.5% | 31.9% | 18.9% | 2.8% |
| Improving schools' overall performance | 27.5% | 45.7% | 20.2% | 1.4% |
| Meeting the needs of special populations | 56.5% | 28.1% | 10.0% | 1.9% |

While the perceptions about experiences were quite mixed, the respondents were generally unfavorable in their assessment of state support in these eight key areas. Levels of support were rated as "poor" at least 20% across all eight items. Support for meeting the needs of special populations appears to be the area of biggest concern, with over 55% of respondents rating the support as poor and less than 2% rating support in this area as excellent. There also appears to be widespread concern about support for developing human resource policies to improve staff quality, as 43% of respondents rated this area poorly and less than 2% rated support as being excellent. Support for interpreting MCAS results was rated most highly among these eight indicators, but even this indicator was ranked as excellent less than ten percent of the time and as poor over 20% of the time by respondents.

Perhaps the most insightful analysis into the extent to which district and school level educators are concerned about support for special needs populations and the development of human resource policies to improve staff quality comes from an examination in the differences between the average response from teachers to these support items and the average response from the administrative perspective. Administrators reported significantly higher ratings of support than did teachers on all of the items measuring aspects of support, except for two items – those that dealt with special needs populations and the development of human resource policies to improve staff quality. Both administrators and teachers ranked these areas as being supported at similarly low levels by the state.

There were also some notable patterns of open-ended responses related to issues of support. In particular, three issues were identified that relate to issues of support. These include:

- Lack of sufficient quantities of human resources in the Department of Education
- Lack of qualified personnel in the Department of Education
- Too many demands placed on the Department of Education

The most prevalent patterns of issues related to support identified in the open-ended responses focused on the Department of Education's need for a greater quantity of personnel. Some of the comments in this area included:

- It appears more human resources are needed at the DOE to fully assist local districts.
- Their (the Department of Education) staff has actually been reduced over the last several years.

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[12] Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the omission of an "I don't know" category in the reporting of responses.

- The DoE staff is under-funded and under-staffed
- Insufficient personnel to answer questions.
- Although the Doe staff tries to be helpful, they are short-staffed.
- It seems that they are always under-staffed.
- Personnel in the department are over-worked. For example, individuals have been given responsibility for for school building assistance without being relieved of other duties.
- Human resources are becoming an on-going problem as the scarcity of personnel in grants management and certification has impacted regular district-wide inquiries and decisions.
- They need more personnel to advise and consult in the area of professional development for classroom teachers and guidance counselors.

Many respondents also indicated that they thought that many staff members at the Department of Education are under-qualified for their positions and/or lack experience that helps them understand what really happens in districts and schools. Examples of comments related to this theme include:

- Too many DOE staff have never worked in schools. They lack contextual awareness needed to provide support for change.
- Many of the employees have no clue about day-to-day school operations including several on the Board of Ed. . .
- More DoE staff need to have experience working in schools as public teachers or administrators.
- No – more expertise is needed. Pay experienced teachers to do the job.
- I don't know! I feel many people aren't qualified for the positions they are in.
- Personnel do not have tech or financial resources and it is my impression that many lack the educational experience necessary to recognize feasible solutions to situations which arise.

The Department of Education also has too many demands placed on it with too few resources provided to assist them in meeting of all of these challenges. Some respondents note:

- At present, the mandates of Ed Reform are too broad for DOE to address every area and every school adequately.
- DoE is over-whelmed by all they have to do.
- Ed. reform has created too much to do at all levels – including the state.

## State Versus Local Responsibility for Education Reform

One of the key issues in determining the state's capacity for implementing education reform is the extent to which the state and local levels of the education are primarily or jointly responsible for implementing education reform. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate whether the following twelve tasks[13] of education reform were primarily the responsibility of the state, primarily the responsibility of local districts and schools, or a shared responsibility between state and local authorities. The results from these items can be found below in Table 7.

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[13] These twelve tasks were identified by the research team as being areas that represent key responsibilities of education reform.

**Table 7 – Summary of Responses to State Versus Local Responsibility Items**

| Task | Primarily State Responsibility | Shared Responsibility | Primarily Local Responsibility |
|------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Developing and implementing curriculum standards | 12.1 | 76.1 | 11.5 |
| Developing and administering a student assessment system | 10.7 | 72.8 | 16.3 |
| Developing an accountability system for school and district performance | 14.6 | 72.5 | 12.6 |
| Supporting local governance and management of education reform | 14.2 | 63.2 | 19.7 |
| Developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel | 14.8 | 52.6 | 31.8 |
| Providing and/or guiding professional development | 2.3 | 58.6 | 38.5 |
| Allocating funding in a way that is adequate and equitable | 42.6 | 47.2 | 9.7 |
| Facilitating inter-district transfer | 19.7 | 27.9 | 37.1 |
| Supervising charter schools | 58.5 | 22.2 | 8.5 |
| Ensuring readiness to learn through early childhood and literacy programs | 11.0 | 70.9 | 15.8 |
| Making state-level policy and planning decisions in coordination with key actors | 31.6 | 62.6 | 1.4 |
| Collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system | 30.4 | 65.6 | 2.8 |

Respondents were more likely to perceive that ten of the twelve tasks are a shared responsibility, rather than primarily either a state or local responsibility. One of the tasks, supervising charter schools, was viewed by a majority of the respondents (58.5%) as being primarily a state responsibility. In contrast, more respondents indicated that facilitating inter-district transfer was primarily a local responsibility. Although adequate and equitable allocation of funding is seen as primarily a shared responsibility (47.2%), almost as many respondents (42.6%) viewed this task as being primarily a state responsibility.

Providing and guiding professional development was one area that respondents clearly viewed as not being a state responsibility, with only 2.3% of respondents indicating that this was a state responsibility from their perspective. On the other hand, respondents did not view supervision of charter schools (8.5%), making state-level policy and planning decisions (1.4%), or collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system (2.8%) as being local responsibilities.

There were no statistically significant differences between superintendents and principals on any of the responsibility items. There were significant differences between administrators and teachers on two of the items - developing an accountability system for school and district performance and developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel. In both cases, teachers were more likely to report that these tasks were primarily local responsibilities while administrators were more likely to report that they were shared responsibilities. Interestingly, superintendents and principals also differed significantly on the issue of responsibility for developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel. Both administrative groups most frequently reported this task as a shared responsibility, but of those who did not view this as a shared responsibility, superintendents were more likely to view this as a state responsibility while principals who didn't view these processes as a shared responsibility were more likely to view it as a local responsibility.

## Flow of Information

The survey also asked respondents to provide some information regarding the flow of information to professionals in districts and schools. Four types of questions were included on the survey that focused on the flow of information. Respondents were asked how frequently they contacted the Department of Education, how easy it was to get information from the Department of Education, how they received information about education reform, and how they contacted individuals at the Department of Education. The responses to these questions are summarized below.

### Table 8 – Summary of Responses Regarding Frequency of Contact

| How frequently do you contact the Department of Education? | |
|---|---|
| Never | 3.7% |
| Once Per Year | 7.1% |
| Several Times Per Year | 60.9% |
| Once Per Month | 15.6% |
| Once Per Week | 10.8% |
| More Than Once Per Week | 2.2% |

Table 8 indicates that most (over 60%) respondents[14] contact the department several times per year, with many fewer respondents indicating that they contact the Department of Education less frequently. Most of the remaining respondents indicating that they contact the Department of Education at least once per month, if not more frequently. In an analysis of differences between the two administrative groups, superintendents were significantly more likely to contact the Department of Education than were principals.

### Table 9 – Summary of Responses Regarding Ease of Obtaining Information

| How easy is it to get information from the Department of Education? | |
|---|---|
| Very Easy | 5.8% |
| Easy | 26.3% |
| Difficult | 57.0% |
| Very Difficult | 10.9% |

Respondents were also asked to indicate ways in which they received information about education reform. Table 9 shows that the majority (57%) of respondents indicated that it was difficult to get information from the Department of Education. There were no differences between superintendents and principals on this item, but teachers were more likely to indicate that they found it difficult to obtain information from the Department of Education.

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[14] Only superintendents and principals were asked this question, as teachers were unlikely to directly contact the Department of Education with any frequency.

**Table 10 – Summary of Responses Regarding Sources of Information About Education Reform**

| How do you get information about education reform[15]? | |
|---|---|
| Documents mailed directly to me by the Department of Education | 87.9% |
| The Department of Education web site | 69.0% |
| The media | 56.6% |
| Via a union or professional association | 55.5% |
| Documents mailed by the Department of Education to districts and distributed in schools | 49.7% |
| Documents mailed directly to me by other state agencies or offices | 29.6% |

Table 10 indicates that most respondents (approximately 88%) obtained information about education reform directly from the Department of Education. However, almost every respondent used multiple sources of information to learn about education reform.

Superintendents were more likely to get documents from other state agencies or offices and were more likely to get information from the Department of Education's web site than were either principals or teachers. Teachers were less likely than either group of administrators to get information directly from the Department of Education or from the Department's web site. However, teachers were more likely to use the media, union and professional associations, and documents passed on at the local level from the state as sources of information than were superintendents and teachers.

**Table 11 – Summary of Responses Indicating How Respondents Most Frequently Contact the Department of Education**

| How do you (or your staff) most frequently contact someone at the Department of Education[16]? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Teachers | Admins. | All |
| I directly contact a specific department or program area | 19.5% | 55.2% | 47.5% |
| I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I call him/her | 18.2% | 40.1% | 35.3% |
| I directly contact someone I already know | 6.5% | 41.9% | 34.2% |
| I use the switchboard operator to direct me to the appropriate contact person | 29.9% | 23.5% | 24.9% |
| I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I send him/her an email message | 18.2% | 40.1% | 18.1% |
| I do not contact the Department of Education | 44.2% | 7.2% | 15.3% |

Flow of information was also investigated in the other direction as respondents were asked how they (or their staff) most frequently contacted the Department of Education. Table 11 indicates that most respondents (47.5%) contact the Department of Education by directly contacting a specific department or program area. Of those individuals who reported contacting the Department of Education, respondents were least likely (18.1%) to report using the Department's web page and following up with an email, although using the web page to get a phone number was the second most popular (35.3%) means of contacting the Department of Education. Just over 15% of respondents indicated that they do not contact the Department of Education.

Administrators, superintendents and principals, were more likely to report higher frequencies of directly contacting a specific department or program area, using the web page to get phone numbers, and using the switchboard operator than were teachers. However, teachers and principals were more likely to contact someone they knew than were than were superintendents. It is also interesting to note that thee were no significant differences among the three groups with regard to the item indicating no contact with the Department of Education.

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[15] Respondents were allowed to mark more than one response in order to identify all sources of information used by any one respondent.
[16] Some respondents checked more than one response for this item, resulting in percentages that exceed 100%.

There were also a number of comments from the open-ended questions that related to flow of information. More specifically, many respondents commented on how slow the Department of Education is at returning calls and answering inquiries.

- I have on several occasions called for assistance regarding state reports only to not have my calls returned.
- The web page is very informative and well done, however it is almost impossible to get someone on the phone to answer a question.
- My only contact with DOE personnel comes when I call with a question. Most times, people with whom I speak are helpful, but reluctant to give definitive answers.
- It's nearly impossible to contact the DOE departments regarding certification and the frameworks.
- Massive change. Inefficient system, and follow through. No help on the phone (20 messages) when MCAS did not arrive. Staff lacks professionalism. Certification department a total embarrassment. Can't seem to make deadlines – looks good on paper but not in reality.
- They need to be more timely in providing answers, answer phones, etc.

Others noted that the Department of Education has greatly improved communication through better use of technology and information systems. Sample comments included:

- However, they have improved with communication in previous years.
- I feel that the DOE does an excellent job of distributing data and collecting data.
- The web page is helpful and getting better all of the time.

## Relationships Among Key Indicators

In addition to the descriptive analysis provided above, relationships among eight key indicators were also investigated. In particular, the relationships among the five experience factors (composite items representing the experience items groupings for local impact, communication of goals, local control, use of data, and state personnel), a composite scale of the support items (labeled "support"), the frequency of contact variable, and the variable measuring how easy it is to get information.

The frequency of contact measure had very few statistically significant relationships with the other seven variables. The more individuals reported interacting with the Department of Education the more likely they were to report positive local impact from education reform effort and the more likely they were to report having positive experiences with state personnel. However, these were the weakest of the statistically significant relationships among any of the variables included in this particular analysis.

All of the relationships among the remaining seven variables were positive and statistically significant. This pattern of findings indicates that individuals who have positive experiences in one area of education reform are more likely to perceive positive experiences in other areas, are more likely to report high levels of support from the state, and are more likely to believe that information regarding education reform is easy to obtain. Figure 1 shows this pattern of relationships among these key indicators.

Figure 1 – Significant Relationships Among Key Indicators
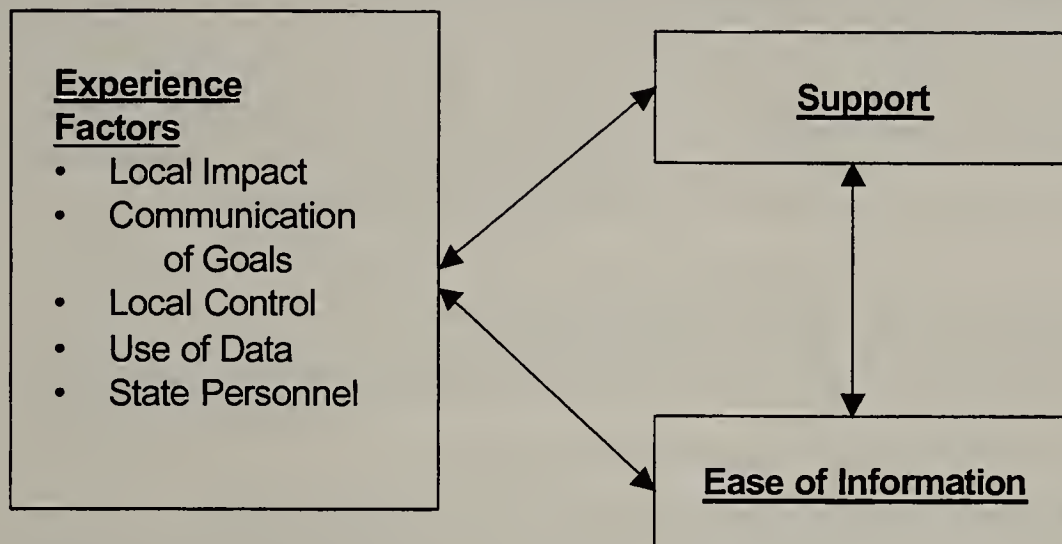


## Implementation of Education Reform Components

Respondents were provided the opportunity to provide open-ended responses regarding the components of education reform that have not yet been implemented. The most common responses included:

- Adequate funding
- Fully integrated curriculum frameworks
- Professional development
- Early childhood and literacy programs
- Comprehensive assessment
- Nothing

Funding appears to remain as a major unresolved issue for superintendents, principals, and teachers alike. The comments below reflect a wide range of ways in which many local educators feel that adequate and equitable funding has not yet been fully implemented or realized throughout the Commonwealth as a result of education reform.

- Funding - $ - need for more $. When state contribution to city or town decreases it is difficult to assist students.
- Money for materials! Difficult to get grant money for the programs you want.
- Greater financial support for schools in terms of providing them with resources to be able to meet the standards.
- I am not convinced that appropriate financial resources are available to poorer students in poorer schools.
- Funding sources for the implementation of Ed Reform has been insufficient – especially related to curriculum revisions and MCAS administration.

There were also concerns that curriculum frameworks have not been fully developed or implemented, as some of the comments below demonstrate.

- Common core of learning – world language requirement have not been implemented. Our school district has embraced this as a direction – yet the state gives little or no acknowledgment of this fact.
- Clearly established curriculum frameworks that are used for a consistent period of time.
- Getting those frameworks in place and keeping them there!
- The implementation of MCAS testing was done much too rapidly. There was not enough time or money given to align curriculum with frameworks.

Professional development also remains a concern as an area of education reform that has not been fully implemented.

- Ed. reform has had virtually no impact on professional development.
- The state keeps changing what we are expected to do, but never provides us with training about how to do the new things.
- It's unclear what is supposed to happen with professional development.
- The new system focuses more on punishing teachers rather than on improving teachers.
- There is less time for professional development because of all of the other things educators have to do in order to comply with ever-changing state mandates.

Some respondents also indicated the early childhood education and literacy had not yet been adequately addressed or implemented as a part of education reform. Some respondents noted the following observations in this area.

- The whole early childhood thing has been left out so far. I hope that changes soon.
- Until we may more attention to early childhood issues, especially in urban and other disadvantaged areas, education reform is doomed to fail.

Comprehensive assessment was widely reported to be an unimplemented part of education reform according to several respondents.

- Multiple types of assessment processes are still needed.
- Assessment in Science and Social Studies have not been included in the graduation requirement. Goals to include foreign language in testing and graduation requirements long ago.
- Multiple ways to earn graduation (are needed).
- Multiple assessments = Good education.

Finally, despite the fact that the majority of comments tended to be negative and focus on the incomplete aspects of the implementation of education reform, there were also large number of individuals who indicated that nothing else needed to be implemented or that education reform was working and having positive effects. Some of the comments to this effect include the following quotes taken from the open-ended questions on the survey.

- As a result of the Education Reform, I find instructors practices are now systematized, and our instructional programs are data driven, and our professional development is developed around specific instructional needs.
- Educational Reform has had some positive influences regarding staffing, professional development, etc.
- Overall Ed Reform has had a positive impact on my school. Professional development opportunities for staff have increased significantly and school council has enabled us to set clear goals for our school.
- I support it because all students will be expected to meet high standards.

## Recommendations for Change

Respondents were also asked in an open-ended question about their recommendations for change. While several themes emerged in response to this question, many respondents emphasized the need for more constructive relationships between the states and local districts. This sentiment was articulated in a variety of ways including the following statements.

- Make sure everybody at the DOE is on the same page. We receive too much contradictory information. Make sure the DOE really wants us to do what it is about to require.
- Please listen carefully to the educators in the field.
- More professional assistance for schools and less bureaucratic red tape.
- I feel that the DOE does an excellent job of distributing data and collecting data. I would like to see the DOE be more collaborative with schools and districts in developing instructional plans that improve student learning, i.e. a resource team that could work with my school on implementing our school improvement plan goals.
- Come and talk to us!

As a related suggestion, many respondents indicated the need for more visits to local schools by the Department of Education and other state officials. Sample comments in this area include:

- DOE employees need to get out into the districts and talk to and listen to the teachers, principals, etc.
- Have people from DOE – come out to model in districts – do prof. dev. – observe in schools for long periods of time.
- I make informal visits to each classroom in my building everyday. In this way, I get to know my students and staff. How often do DOE staff visit the schools whose fates they hold in their hands?

## Other Issues

Several issues arose in other opportunities for open-ended responses. Most frequently, a number of individuals reported that the state, under the auspices of education reform, has made too many contradictory demands on schools.

- Yes, the curriculum frameworks keep changing radically. As soon as we get things in a line, everything shifts again, ie: Sci & tech. – we set up a sequence of integrated science (9) and biology (10) and intro to technology (9). Now the science curriculum is being altered which would have allowed our previous curriculum to have remained.
- As is the case with any bureaucracy, there sometimes are mixed messages. I frequently feel that the DOE staff have completely lost touch with day to day operations of a public school.
- Changing policies on frameworks/ first round of MCAS was going to be base line? Recertification went from a positive exercise to a punitive experience. Teacher bashing has had negative effects.
- Yes – they want us to improve instruction, use technology, teach students to be technologically savvy, have students work in teams. MCAS runs counter to all of this.
- Absolutely! They keep changing the frameworks and the testing schedule!

## Conclusion

Educators at various levels – district superintendents, school principals, and classroom teachers – are heavily invested in and strongly influenced by education reform. The findings from this survey suggest that many educators at the local level are frustrated by a variety of issues associated with the implementation of education reform. On the other hand, there are also many educators who report progress and satisfaction with education reform and its implementation.

In general, administrators appear to be better informed and more satisfied with the levels of implementation of education reform than teachers. It is not clear from the data collected from this study what the reasons for the information and satisfaction gap between administrators and teachers. This is an issue that merits further study.

Clearly, communication and involvement are important to local educators. The state may want to consider ways in which communication and involvement in improving the state's capacity for implementing education reform can be improved. The examination of relationships among key variables from this survey suggests that there is a positive relationship between levels of perceived support, the ease at which information can be obtained and educators having more positive experiences with education reform.

The educators who responded to this survey also view the implementation of the tasks associated with education reform as primarily a shared responsibility between the state and local districts and schools. Many of the responses to open-ended questions also suggest that finding ways to improve communication and participation across state and local boundaries has the potential to improve the state's capacity for education reform.

# Appendix 3

## State vs. Federal FTE's at the Massachusetts Department of Education

| FISCAL YR. | FEDERAL FTE | STATE FTE | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 367 | 623 | 990 |
| 1981 | 367 | 605 | 972 |
| 1982 | 349 | 524 | 873 |
| 1983 | 310 | 516 | 826 |
| 1984 | 303 | 487 | 790 |
| 1985 | 296 | 286 | 582 |
| 1986 | 299 | 357 | 656 |
| 1987 | 277 | 350 | 627 |
| 1988 | 255 | 366 | 621 |
| 1989 | 254 | 354 | 608 |
| 1990 | 254 | 275 | 529 |
| 1991 | 232 | 184 | 416 |
| 1992 | 212 | 172 | 384 |
| 1993 | 180 | 145 | 325 |
| 1994 | 200 | 142 | 342 |
| 1995 | 198 | 148 | 346 |
| 1996 | 193 | 142 | 335 |
| 1997 | 193 | 145 | 338 |
| 1998 | 191 | 147 | 338 |
| 1999 | 183 | 216 | 399 |
| 2000 | 171 | 224 | 395 |
| 2001 | 183 | 222 | 405 |

## Appendix 4
## Interview Protocols and Survey Instruments

Interview Protocols

### 1. Local/District Personnel

I'm interviewing you as part of a study of the state's capacity to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. The team carrying out the study is based at the Center for Education Policy of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Our goal for the study is to produce positive, constructive recommendations to state policy makers. We want to take stock of various offices' responsibilities for Education Reform, how well-equipped they have been to carry out these responsibilities, and how they might be better supported.

The study is sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission. The Commission was established by the state legislature in 1993 to oversee implementation of the Education Reform Act. The Commission's primary activity is funding independent research on various education reform related topics.

The findings from our study will be made public later this year. What you tell me today may be included in the report, but will not be attributed to you by name or by position.

I'd like to make a tape of this interview so that we have an accurate record of what was said. Is this OK? If you want me to turn off the tape recorder at any point, please say so.

## Background questions –
- What is your position?
- How long in this position?
- How long have you worked for (school or district)?
- Where did you work before this position?

1. **I'd like to start with some questions about how Education Reform has affected your work, and how you've worked with state agencies.**

- How has your job has changed as a result of MERA?
- How effective was the DoE in communicating with you about these changes, if any?
- What do you understand to be the state's responsibilities and the districts' responsibilities in implementing the Education Reform Act? Do you think this balance is appropriate?
    (Prompt for feedback about different types of responsibilities – technical assistance, regulation, finance, and research and data collection.)
- How has Education Reform affected your district's priorities?

- Has the DoE given you appropriate help doing your job? If so, how? If not, what was lacking?
- How often do you or others you know in your district or school interact with DoE?
    Prompt: with what person or what office most frequently?
- How would you characterize those interactions?
- Have these interactions with the DoE changed since the implementation of MERA?

**2. I'm also interested in knowing how information gets communicated between DoE and local districts.**
- What kinds of information, opinions, or other inputs does your school or district send to DOE, and to whom? Are there others you think you should be sending?
- What kinds of information, guidance, mandates, or other output does DoE give to your district? From whom is it sent? What would you like to receive?
- Is it your impression that this process is efficient and effective?
- Are there other state agencies to which you submit information, or from which you get information and/or guidance?

**3. Now, I'd like to ask a few questions about your perceptions of how DOE works.**
- What do you see as the goals and priorities of the DoE? Who sets them?
- How have these goals and priorities changed over time?
- To what degree do you see MERA implementation as the major goal and number-one priority of the department?

**4. The page I'm giving you summarizes 11 key components of the Education Reform Act of 1993. Given this description of the Act, what would you say about the state's capacity, or ability, to implement it? What has the state done well, and what has it done less well?** (Ask respondents to specify who they mean when they refer to "the state"--try to get more specific than "DOE." Also prompt if necessary about different types of responsibilities—technical assistance, regulation, finance, data collection and information.)


Curriculum standards
Student assessment system
Accountability system for school and district performance
Local governance and management of schools and districts
Processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel
Professional development
School finance/funding
Choice and charter schools
Readiness to learn/early childhood/literacy
State-level policy and planning
Collecting and using information to improve system performance

4. **Finally, I'd like to hear your recommendations for the future implementation of Education Reform.**

- What advice would you give to MERRC about the state's capacity to implement education reform?
- What could the DoE do that would be most helpful to you in doing your job more effectively?
- Are there other states or models of managing education reform that you find interesting?

## Department of Education Personnel

Introductory material same in this protocol as in the Local/District Protocol

**Background questions --**
- How long have you worked at DoE, and in what capacity?
- Where did you work before DoE? School- or district-based experience?
- Why did you come to DOE?

1. **First, I'd like to get a sense of what your job entails.**
- Could you briefly describe your job for me, your main day-to-day tasks?
      Prompt: state or federal program/mandate/funds, or both? Other grants?
- Do you work more with people who are inside of DoE, or outside? Who are these people?
- What are the best things about your job?
- What are the hardest things about your job?
- How do you know what you are supposed to do in your job? Who determines your priorities?

2. **Now, I'd like to talk about the work of DoE overall.**
- From your perspective, what are the major goals and priorities of DoE? Who sets them?
- Do any goals or priorities conflict?
- How has the nature of work at DoE changed?
      Prompt: effect of Education Reform
- What makes DoE's work difficult?
- What could make DoE's work easier?

3. **Now, I have some more specific questions about DoE and Education Reform.**
 The page I'm giving you summarizes 11 key components of the Education Reform Act of 1993. On which of these components do you work most? (several OK):

Curriculum standards
Student assessment system
Accountability system for school and district performance
Local governance and management of schools and districts

Processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel
Professional development
School finance/funding
Choice and charter schools
Readiness to learn/early childhood/literacy
State-level policy and planning
Collecting and using information to improve system performance


In the areas you mention, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not effective and 10 being maximally effective, how would you rate the effectiveness of implementation?

- To what would you attribute that degree of implementation effectiveness? (Prompt for specifics in following areas:)
  - Data and information
  - Technology
  - Staff (Prompt: to what extend does your division/cluster rely on consultants? Do you see the use of consultants as a problem?)
  - Training
  - Funds
  - Communication – internal and external
  - Other resource needs


**4. Finally, I'd like to hear your ideas about what changes might be made to help DoE in its work implementing Education Reform.**

- How could DoE use its existing resources more efficiently to meet its responsibilities?
- What other resources from outside of DoE (either state or other) could help DoE's capacity?
- Are there other states or models of managing education reform that you find interesting?
- Is there anything else you think I should know about DoE or the capacity of the state to implement Education Reform?

## 3. Other Stakeholders

Same introductory material as in other protocols.

Background question –How does your job connect you to education reform?

**1. Massachusetts Education Reform has been characterized as a bargain between the state and local districts, in which the state provides more money to districts in exchange for local accountability for meeting standards. How would you characterize that description?**

**2. The card I'm giving you summarizes 11 key components of the Education Reform Act of 1993. Given this description of the Act, what would you say about the state's capacity, or ability, to implement it? What has the state done well, and what has it done less well? (Ask**

respondents to specify who they mean when they refer to "the state"--try to get more
specific than "DOE." Also prompt if necessary about different types of responsibilities—
technical assistance, regulation, finance, data collection and information.)

Curriculum standards
Student assessment system
Accountability system for school and district performance
Local governance and management of schools and districts
Processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel
Professional development
School finance/funding
Choice and charter schools
Readiness to learn/early childhood/literacy
State-level policy and planning
Collecting and using information to improve system performance

4. Why has the state done _____ well?

5. Why has the state done _____ less well?

6. I'd also like to hear your perceptions of DoE's goals and priorities. In particular, how
have DoE's goals and priorities changed over time?

Finally, I'm interested in hearing your recommendations about the future implementation
of Education Reform.

7. What advice would you give to MERRC about the state's capacity to implement
education reform?

8. How could DoE use its existing resources more efficiently to meet its responsibilities?

9. How could other agencies or outside organizations assist DoE with implementing
MERA?

10. How could your organization help DoE with the implementation of MERA? Have you
been approached to give this assistance? Has it been offered?

11. Are there other states or models of managing education reform that you find
interesting?

12. Is there anything else you think I should know about the capacity of the state to
implement Education Reform?

# Massachusetts' State Capacity for Educational Reform:

# Superintendent/Central Office Survey

ID####### (superintendent version)

As explained in the cover letter, data from this survey will be used to assess the capacity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act of 1993. The research is sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission and is being carried out by the Center for Education Policy of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Your perspective as a district administrator is particularly important to us in identifying areas of success and areas in which improvement is needed. Your responses to the survey will be confidential.

The report will be completed and released to the public by the Education Reform Review Commission later this year. Thank you for participating!

## A.    Your position

1. Please indicate which description most closely fits your position (check one):

☐ Superintendent

☐ Assistant Superintendent

☐ Other (Specify)_____

2. What percentage of your student population lives in poverty (as determined by free lunch?)_____

## B.    Your own experience with Education Reform

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. I understand the goals of the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 4. The state's priorities under Education Reform are clear. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 5. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **local school districts**. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 6. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **the general public**. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 7. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of **districts** in implementing the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |

8. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role
   of **schools** in implementing the Education Reform Act. ....... 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

9. Education Reform has had a positive impact on my district. . 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

10. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **instruction** in my district. ................................................. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

11. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **curriculum** in my district. ................................................. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

12. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **professional development** in my district. ............................ 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

13. Education Reform fits well with my
    district's other priorities. ................................................. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

14. Education Reform has crowded out other initiatives
    I think are more important ................................................. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

    Which ones?_____

15. The Department of Education collects appropriate data
    from schools ................................................................... 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

16. The Department of Education uses these data appropriately .. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

17. The data my district gets from the Department of
    Education are helpful for our efforts to improve the
    quality of education. ....................................................... 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

18. When I have a question about Education Reform, the
    Department of Education is helpful in answering it. ............. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

19. The Department of Education seems to have enough
    staff to carry out its responsibilities. ................................. 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

20. Department of Education staff members have the
    qualifications and experiences they need to provide useful
    support to schools and districts. ....................................... 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

21. Under Education Reform, the state has too much power. ...... 1 ............. 2 ............. 3 ............. 4 ............. DK

22. In your opinion, are there components of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act that have not yet been
    implemented? If so, which ones?

23. In your opinion, does the state make contradictory demands on schools? Please explain.

24. Additional Comments About Your Own Experience with Education Reform?

## C.     Support for districts and schools

How would you rate the state's support for your school in the following areas?
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=excellent; 2=good; 3=fair; 4=poor; NB=no basis for judgement)

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Basis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. Aligning curriculum with the state's frameworks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 26. Providing support for students who score poorly on MCAS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 27. Interpreting MCAS results | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 28. Developing human resource policies to improve staff quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 29. Professional development for teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 30. Professional development for administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 31. Improving schools' overall performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |
| 32. Meeting the needs of special populations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NB |

33. Do you believe that the Department of Education has appropriate human, technical, or financial resources in order to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act?  Please explain.

34. What changes would you recommend regarding how the Department of Education works?

35. What are the most important ways for the Department of Education to be involved with local districts and schools?

36. Additional Comments about Support for Districts and Schools

## D.     State versus local responsibilities in Education Reform

The Education Reform Act of 1993 assigned many new education-related tasks to the state government. For each category of tasks in the following table, please indicate whether you believe these tasks should be primarily a state responsibility, primarily a local responsibility, or a shared responsibility.

| Task | Primarily State Responsibility | Shared Responsibility | Primarily Local Responsibility | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. Developing and implementing curriculum standards | | | | |
| 38. Developing and administering a student assessment system | | | | |
| 39. Developing an accountability system for school and district performance | | | | |
| 40. Supporting local governance and management in education reform | | | | |
| 41. Developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel | | | | |
| 42. Providing and/or guiding professional development | | | | |
| 43. Allocating funding in a way that is adequate and equitable | | | | |
| 44. Facilitating inter-district choice | | | | |
| 45. Supervising Charter Schools | | | | |
| 46. Ensuring readiness to learn, through early childhood and literacy programs | | | | |
| 47. Making state-level policy and planning decisions, in coordination with key actors | | | | |
| 48. Collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system | | | | |

49. Has your school been involved in Education Reform-related activities with state agencies or offices other than the Department of Education?  Which ones?



50. Do other states provide models of managing education reform that you believe could be instructive?  Which states, and which components of their education reform models, are most useful? ?



### E.    Flow of Information

51. How do you get information about Education Reform?
(check all that apply)

❏ Documents mailed directly to me by the Department of Education

❏ Documents mailed directly to me by other state agencies or offices

❏ Documents mailed by the Department to my district and circulated to the schools

❏ The Department of Education web site

❏ Via a union or professional association

❏ The media

❏ Other?


52. How easy is it for you to get information from the Department of Education?

❏ Very Easy

❏ Easy

❏ Difficult

❏ Very Difficult

53. How do you most frequently contact someone at the Department of Education?

❑ I directly contact someone one I already know

❑ I directly contact a specific department or program area

❑ I use the switchboard operator to direct me to the appropriate contact person

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I call them

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I send them an email message

❑ Other (please specifiy)_____

❑ I do not contact the Department of Education

## F. Assessing Change

54. In the past 5 years, what changes have you seen in your school with respect to the following:

a. Instructional time

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____# minutes per week

b. Length of school year or day

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____ # hours/days

c. Teacher attendance

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____%change, if any

d. Teachers with appropriate certification

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____%change, if any

e. Percent of budget allocated to professional development

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____%change, if any

f. Percent of budget allocated to curriculum and instruction (texts, new programs, etc.)

_____Increase      _____Decrease      _____Remained the Same      _____%change, if any

**If you have additional comments, please write them in the space below.**

## Massachusetts' State Capacity for Educational Reform: Principal Survey

ID####### (principal version)

As explained in the cover letter, data from this survey will be used to assess the capacity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act of 1993. The research is sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission and is being carried out by the Center for Education Policy of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Your perspective as a principal is particularly important to us in identifying areas of success and areas in which improvement is needed. Your responses to the survey will be confidential.

The report will be completed and released to the public by the Education Reform Review Commission later this year. Thank you for participating!

### A. Your position

1. Please indicate which description most closely fits your position (check one):

☐ Principal

☐ Assistant or Vice Principal

☐ Other (Specify)_____

2. What percentage of your student population lives in poverty (as determined by free lunch?)_____

### B. Your own experience with Education Reform

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. I understand the goals of the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 4. The state's priorities under Education Reform are clear. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 5. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **local school districts**. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 6. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **the general public.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 7. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of **districts** in implementing the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 8. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of **schools** in implementing the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |

9.  Education Reform has had a positive impact on my district. . 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

10. Education Reform has had a positive impact on my school. . 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

11. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **instruction** in my district. ............................................ 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

12. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **curriculum** in my district. ............................................ 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

13. Education Reform has improved the quality of
    **professional development** in my district. .......................... 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

14. Education Reform fits well with my
    district's other priorities. .................................... 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

15. Education Reform has crowded out other initiatives
    I think are more important ...................................... 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

    Which ones?_____

16. The Department of Education collects appropriate data
    from schools ........................................................ 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

17. The Department of Education uses these data appropriately .. 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

18. The data my district gets from the Department of
    Education are helpful for our efforts to improve the
    quality of education. ............................................ 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

19. When I have a question about Education Reform, the
    Department of Education is helpful in answering it. ............ 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

20. The Department of Education seems to have enough
    staff to carry out its responsibilities. .......................... 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

21. Department of Education staff members have the
    qualifications and experiences they need to provide useful
    support to schools and districts. .............................. 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

22. Under Education Reform, the state has too much power. ...... 1 ............ 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ............ DK

23. In your opinion, are there components of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act that have not yet been
    implemented?  If so, which ones?

24. In your opinion, does the state make contradictory demands on schools?  Please explain.

25. Additional Comments About Your Own Experience with Education Reform?

## C.    Support for districts and schools

How would you rate the state's support for your school in the following areas?
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=excellent; 2=good; 3=fair; 4=poor; NB=no basis for judgement)

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Basis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

26. Aligning curriculum with the state's frameworks .................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

27. Providing support for students who score poorly on MCAS .. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

28. Interpreting MCAS results .................................................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

29. Developing human resource policies to improve staff quality 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

30. Professional development for teachers .............................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

31. Professional development for administrators ...................... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

32. Improving schools' overall performance ............................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

33. Meeting the needs of special populations .......................... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 .............. 4 .............. NB

34. Do you believe that the Department of Education has appropriate human, technical, or financial resources in order to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act? Please explain.

35. What changes would you recommend regarding how the Department of Education works?

36. What are the most important ways for the Department of Education to be involved with local districts and schools?

37. Additional Comments about Support for Districts and Schools

## D.   State versus local responsibilities in Education Reform

The Education Reform Act of 1993 assigned many new education-related tasks to the state government. For each category of tasks in the following table, please indicate whether you believe these tasks should be primarily a state responsibility, primarily a local responsibility, or a shared responsibility.

| Task | Primarily State Responsibility | Shared Responsibility | Primarily Local Responsibility | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38. Developing and implementing curriculum standards | | | | |
| 39. Developing and administering a student assessment system | | | | |
| 40. Developing an accountability system for school and district performance | | | | |
| 41. Supporting local governance and management in education reform | | | | |
| 42. Developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel | | | | |
| 43. Providing and/or guiding professional development | | | | |
| 44. Allocating funding in a way that is adequate and equitable | | | | |
| 45. Facilitating inter-district choice | | | | |
| 46. Supervising Charter Schools | | | | |
| 47. Ensuring readiness to learn, through early childhood and literacy programs | | | | |
| 48. Making state-level policy and planning decisions, in coordination with key actors | | | | |
| 49. Collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system | | | | |

50. Has your school been involved in Education Reform-related activities with state agencies or offices other than the Department of Education? Which ones?

51. Do other states provide models of managing education reform that you believe could be instructive? Which states, and which components of their education reform models, are most useful? ?

## E. Flow of Information

52. How do you get information about Education Reform?
(check all that apply)

☐ Documents mailed directly to me by the Department of Education

☐ Documents mailed directly to me by other state agencies or offices

☐ Documents mailed by the Department to my district and circulated to the schools

☐ The Department of Education web site

☐ Via a union or professional association

☐ The media

☐ Other?

53. How easy is it for you to get information from the Department of Education?

☐ Very Easy

☐ Easy

☐ Difficult

☐ Very Difficult

54. How do you most frequently contact someone at the Department of Education?

❑ I directly contact someone one I already know

❑ I directly contact a specific department or program area

❑ I use the switchboard operator to direct me to the appropriate contact person

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I call them

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I send them an email message

❑ Other (please specifiy)_____

❑ I do not contact the Department of Education

*F. Assessing Change*

55. In the past 5 years, what changes have you seen in your school with respect to the following:

   g.  Instructional time

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____# minutes per week

   h.  Length of school year or day

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____ # hours/days

   i.  Teacher attendance

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____%change, if any

   j.  Teachers with appropriate certification

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____%change, if any

   k.  Percent of budget allocated to professional development

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____%change, if any

   l.  Percent of budget allocated to curriculum and instruction (texts, new programs, etc.)

     _____Increase     _____Decrease     _____Remained the Same     _____%change, if any

**If you have additional comments, please write them in the space below.**

# Massachusetts' State Capacity for Educational Reform: Teacher Survey

ID####### (teacher version)

As explained in the cover letter, data from this survey will be used to assess the capacity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act of 1993. The research is sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission and is being carried out by the Center for Education Policy of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Your perspective as a teacher is particularly important to us in identifying areas of success and areas in which improvement is needed. Your responses to the survey will be confidential.

The report will be completed and released to the public by the Education Reform Review Commission later this year. Thank you for participating!

## A.      Your position

1.  Please indicate which description most closely fits your position:

❑ Elementary school teacher
Grade level?_____

❑ Middle school teacher
      Subject area(s)?_____

❑ High school teacher
      Subject area(s)?_____

❑ Other (Specify)_____

## B.      Your own experience with Education Reform

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. I understand the goals of the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 3. The state's priorities under Education Reform are clear. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 4. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **local school districts**. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 5. State policy makers have done a good job of communicating the goals of the Education Reform Act to **the general public.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 6. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of **districts** in implementing the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |
| 7. The state has reasonable expectations regarding the role of **schools** in implementing the Education Reform Act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | DK |

8. Education Reform has had a positive impact on my district. . 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements:
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=disagree; 4=strongly disagree; DK=don't know)

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

9. Education Reform has had a positive impact on my school. . 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

10. Education Reform has improved the quality of
**instruction** in my district. ................................................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

11. Education Reform has improved the quality of
**curriculum** in my district. ................................................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

12. Education Reform has improved the quality of
**professional development** in my district. ............................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

13. Education Reform fits well with my
district's other priorities. .................................................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

14. Education Reform has crowded out other initiatives
I think are more important ................................................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

   Which ones?_____

15. The data my district gets from the Department of
Education are helpful for our efforts to improve the
quality of education. ........................................................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

16. When I have a question about Education Reform, the
Department of Education is helpful in answering it. .............. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

17. The Department of Education seems to have enough
staff to carry out its responsibilities. ................................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

18. Department of Education staff members have the
qualifications and experiences they need to provide useful
support to schools and districts. ...................................... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

19. Under Education Reform, the state has too much power. ..... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... DK

20. In your opinion, are there components of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act that have not yet been implemented? If so, which ones?

21. In your opinion, does the state make contradictory demands on schools? Please explain.

22. Additional Comments About Your Own Experience with Education Reform?

## C.     Support for districts and schools

How would you rate the state's support for your school in the following areas?
(Circle the appropriate number: 1=excellent; 2=good; 3=fair; 4=poor; NB=no basis for judgement)

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No Basis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

23. Aligning curriculum with the state's frameworks ................. 1 ............... 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

24. Providing support for students who score poorly on MCAS.. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

25. Interpreting MCAS results.................................................... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

26. Developing human resource policies to improve staff quality 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

27. Professional development for teachers .............................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

28. Professional development for administrators....................... 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

29. Improving schools' overall performance.............................. 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

30. Meeting the needs of special populations ............................ 1 .............. 2 .............. 3 ............... 4 ............... NB

31. Do you believe that the Department of Education has appropriate human, technical, or financial resources in order to carry out its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act?  Please explain.

32. What changes would you recommend regarding how the Department of Education works?

33. What are the most important ways for the Department of Education to be involved with local districts and schools?

34. Additional Comments about Support for Districts and Schools

**D.    State versus local responsibilities in Education Reform**

The Education Reform Act of 1993 assigned many new education-related tasks to the state government. For each category of tasks in the following table, please indicate whether you believe these tasks should be primarily a state responsibility, primarily a local responsibility, or a shared responsibility.

| Task | Primarily State Responsibility | Shared Responsibility | Primarily Local Responsibility | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35. Developing and implementing curriculum standards | | | | |
| 36. Developing and administering a student assessment system | | | | |
| 37. Developing an accountability system for school and district performance | | | | |
| 38. Supporting local governance and management in education reform | | | | |
| 39. Developing and administering processes for certifying, evaluating, and dismissing school personnel | | | | |
| 40. Providing and/or guiding professional development | | | | |
| 41. Allocating funding in a way that is adequate and equitable | | | | |
| 42. Facilitating inter-district choice | | | | |
| 43. Supervising Charter Schools | | | | |
| 44. Ensuring readiness to learn, through early childhood and literacy programs | | | | |
| 45. Making state-level policy and planning decisions, in coordination with key actors | | | | |
| 46. Collecting and using information to improve the performance of the state educational system | | | | |

47. Has your school been involved in Education Reform-related activities with state agencies or offices other than the Department of Education? Which ones?

48. Do other states provide models of managing education reform that you believe could be instructive? Which states, and which components of their education reform models, are most useful? ?

## E. Flow of Information

49. How do you get information about Education Reform?
(check all that apply)

☐ Documents mailed directly to me by the Department of Education

☐ Documents mailed directly to me by other state agencies or offices

☐ Documents mailed by the Department to my district and circulated to the schools

☐ The Department of Education web site

☐ Via a union or professional association

☐ The media

☐ Other?

50. How easy is it for you to get information from the Department of Education?

☐ Very Easy

☐ Easy

☐ Difficult

☐ Very Difficult

51. How do you most frequently contact someone at the Department of Education?

❑ I directly contact someone one I already know

❑ I directly contact a specific department or program area

❑ I use the switchboard operator to direct me to the appropriate contact person

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I call them

❑ I use the website to find the appropriate contact person and I send them an email message

❑ Other (please specifiy)_____

❑ I do not contact the Department of Education

**If you have additional comments, please write them in the space below.**

# Appendix 5
## List of Interviewees

Virginia Anderson, *Associate Executive Secretary, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association*

Robert Antonucci, *President, Harcourt Learning Direct; Former Commissioner of Education*

Charles Baker, *President, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care; Former Secretary of Administration and Finance; Member, Massachusetts Board of Education*

Susan Miller Barker, *Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Noah Berger, *Council to the President, Office of Massachusetts Senate President Thomas Birmingham*

Mary Brabeck, *Dean, Boston College School of Education; Member of Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission*

Cecelia Buckley, *Director of Professional Development, Hampshire Educational Collaborative*

Andrew Calkins, *Executive Director, MassInsight Education*

Robert Costrell, *Director of Research and Development, Massachusetts Office of Administration and Finance*

Anthony DeLorenzo, *Director of Budget and Finance, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Ruth Derfler, *Director of Human Resources, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Juliane Dow, *Associate Commissioner for Accountability and Targeted Assistance, Massachusetts Department of Education*

David Driscoll, *Commissioner of Education*

Ann Duffy, *Associate Commissioner for Educator Quality, Massachusetts Department of Education*

William Edgerly, *President, Business for Better Schools*

Joseph Egan, *Assistant Budget Director, Massachusetts Office of Administration and Finance*

Tyler Fairbank, *President, MassExcellence*

Peter Finn, *Senior Vice President for Education, Harcourt Learning Direct; Former Director, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents*

Sue Freedman, *President, Teachers 21; Previously with Massachusetts Department of Education*

Dan French, *Executive Director, Center for Collaborative Education; Previously with Massachusetts Department of Education*

Barbara Gardner, *Associate Commissioner for School Readiness, Department of Education; Former Majority Whip, Massachusetts House of Representatives*

Joseph Giannino, *Director of Legislative Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Judith Gill, *Chancellor, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education*

Stephen Gorrie, *President, Massachusetts Teachers' Association*

Ellen Guiney, *Executive Director, Boston Plan for Excellence*

James Hamos, *Senior Associate, Academic Affairs, Office of the President, University of Massachusetts*

James Hardy, *Field Service Representative, Massachusetts Association of School Committees*

Frank Haydu, *Former Interim Commissioner of Education*

Nadya Aswad Higgins, *Executive Director, Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association*

Sylvester Ingeme, *Director of Corporate Contributions, FleetBoston Foundation*

Bailey Jackson, *Dean, School of Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Tripp Jones, *Executive Director, MassINC*

Francis Kane, *Associate Commissioner, School to Career, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Martin Kaplan, *Senior Partner, Hale and Dorr LLP; Former Chair, Massachusetts Board of Education*

Kathleen Kelley, *President, Massachusetts Federation of Teachers*

Kathe Kirkman, *Evaluation and Research Specialist, Student Assessment Systems, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Lyle Kirtman, *President, Future Management Systems*

Glenn Koocher, *Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Committees*

Harold Lane, *Executive Director, Alliance for Education; Former Co-Chair, Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, Massachusetts General Court*

Kenneth Lemanski, *Special Assistant to the Provost, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Former member of Massachusetts House of Representatives*

David Lizotte, *Lecturer, Director, Teacher Certification Program, College of the Holy Cross*

Christopher Martes, *Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents*

Linda Martin, *Director of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Meg Mayo-Brown, *Director of New Educators, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Kathryn McHugh, *Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust*

Beverly Miyares, *Researcher, Massachusetts Teachers' Association*

Jeffrey Nellhaus, *Associate Commissioner for Student Assessment Programs, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Thomas Noonan, *Associate Commissioner of Mathematics, Science, and Technology/Engineering, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Pendred Noyce, *Trustee, Noyce Foundation, Member of Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission*

James Peyser, *Chair, Massachusetts Board of Education; Chair, Education Management and Accountability Council; Education Advisor to Governor Jane Swift*

Noel Pixley, *Principal, Thornton Burgess Middle School, Hampden, MA*

Darrell Pressley, *Director of Community Outreach, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Paul Reville, *Chair, Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission; Director, Pew Forum; Former Member, Massachusetts Board of Education*

Constance Rizoli, *Research Director, Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanties, Massachusetts General Court*

Mark Roosevelt, *President, Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives; Member, Education Management Accountability Board; Former Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, Massachusetts General Court*

Alan Safran, *Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Policy, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Roberta Schaefer, *Executive Director, Worcester Regional Research Bureau; Member, Massachusetts Board of Education*

Rhoda Schneider, *Senior Associate Commissioner and General Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Joan Schuman, *Executive Director, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, Previously with Department of Education*

Michael Sentance, *Education Advisor to Former Governor Paul Cellucci*

Sylvia Smith, *Chief of Staff, Office of Massachusetts Senator Robert A. Antonioni*

Barbara Solomon, *Title I Director, Massachusetts Department of Education*

John Stager, *Director of Program Quality Assurance, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Sandra Stotsky, *Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Patricia Sweitzer, *Consultant, MassPartners*

Elaine Taber, *Director of Policy Development, Office of Massachusetts House Speaker Thomas Finneran*

Carole Thomson, *Associate Commissioner for Education Program Services, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Kathryn Viator, *Manager of Student Assessment, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Dieter Wahl, *Director, Bureau of Education Audit*

Susan Wheltle, *Coordinator, Office of Humanities, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Melanie Winklosky, *Special Assistant to the Massachusetts Board of Education*

Margaret Wood, *Policy Analyst, State Board of Higher Education; Formerly with Joint Commission on Educator Preparation*

Jeffrey Wulfson, *Chief Financial Officer, Massachusetts Department of Education*

Francis Zak, *Principal, Ralph Mahar Regional High School, Orange, MA*

# Appendix 6

## Department of Education Consultants, FY 1995—FY 2000

Analysis for these tables was conducted by Susan Bowles and Kathryn McDermott. The data came from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

### Accountability

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 4 | $ 7,755.00 | $ 1,878.50 | $ 4,347.42 | $17,389.68 |
| 2000 | 2 | 8,572.92 | 31,290.00 | 19,931.46 | 39,862.92 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 57,252.60 |

### Administration and Policy

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 15,206.50 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | $ 15,206.50 |

### Adult and Community Learning

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 7 | $ 42,911.80 | $ 8,345.99 | $ 18,482.35 | $ 129,376.47 |
| 1996 | 5 | 40,627.90 | 26,429.00 | 30,474.39 | 152,371.94 |
| 1997 | 9 | 47,336.00 | 2,176.20 | 30,288.34 | 272,595.02 |
| 1998 | 8 | 45,631.35 | 2,176.20 | 26,587.45 | 212,699.56 |
| 1999 | 4 | 149,747.50 | 1,440.00 | 62,388.66 | 249,554.63 |
| 2000 | 4 | 27,129.60 | 16,500.00 | 24,216.75 | 96,867.00 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 1,113,464.62 |

## Certification Administration

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 19 | $ 35,965.57 | $ 6,216.69 | $ 16,726.07 | $ 317,795.26 |
| 1996 | 19 | 40,756.30 | 7,714.00 | 21,464.32 | 407,822.09 |
| 1997 | 23 | 45,140.00 | 2,533.80 | 25,668.66 | 590,379.24 |
| 1998 | 22 | 47,128.60 | 502.95 | 28,562.67 | 628,378.77 |
| 1999 | 19 | 50,631.30 | 712.25 | 19,722.75 | 374,732.27 |
| 2000 | 18 | 28,133.51 | 780.00 | 13,623.14 | 245,216.51 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 2,564,324.14 |

## Charter Schools

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 16,852.49 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 44,603.41 |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 61,455.90 |

## Chief Financial Officer

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 37,162.80 |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 37,162.80 |

## Chief Technology Officer

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 28,432.98 |
| 1996 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 40,331.94 |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 2 | $ 40,510.79 | $ 17,119.44 | 28,815.12 | 57,630.23 |
| 1999 | 3 | 41,587.69 | 6,829.18 | 20,058.74 | 60,176.22 |
| 2000 | 3 | 27,218.20 | 17,677.11 | 22,541.30 | 67,623.91 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 254,195.28 |

## Commissioner's Office

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 34,127.97 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 3 | $ 62,092.00 | $ 6,100.00 | $ 32,741.10 | 98,223.29 |
| 1998 | 2 | 13,300.00 | 403.75 | 6,851.88 | 13,703.75 |
| 1999 | 7 | 41,785.34 | 3,820.00 | 25,990.89 | 181,936.23 |
| 2000 | 5 | 27,466.80 | 11,257.31 | 21,597.58 | 107,987.89 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 435,979.13 |

## Early Childhood

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 3 | $ 3,177.50 | $ 300.00 | $ 2,169.08 | $ 6,507.23 |
| 2000 | 3 | 22,671.25 | 1,277.25 | 7,557.08 | 22,671.25 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 29,178.48 |

## Education Program Services

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 4 | $ 20,482.12 | $ 3,166.25 | $ 7,709.18 | $ 30,836.73 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 3,558.21 |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | - | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 34,394.94 |

## Educator Preparation in Higher Education

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 4 | $ 38,070.60 | $ 2,249.90 | $ 21,547.85 | $ 86,191.38 |
| 1997 | 3 | 41,641.50 | 12,545.38 | 24,752.71 | 74,258.14 |
| 1998 | 2 | 42,399.04 | 39,997.44 | 41,198.24 | 82,396.48 |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 44,869.44 |
| 2000 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 26,814.16 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 314,529.60 |

## Humanities

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 2 | $ 29,633.63 | $ 28,579.69 | $ 29,106.66 | $ 58,213.32 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 58,213.32 |

## Learning Support Services

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 13 | $ 44,672.50 | $ 8,229.00 | $ 28,780.46 | $ 374,145.96 |
| 1996 | 9 | 44,472.00 | 11,667.00 | 31,637.12 | 284,734.08 |
| 1997 | 2 | 43,073.92 | 30,167.80 | 36,620.86 | 73,241.72 |
| 1998 | 6 | 29,585.15 | 10,914.48 | 19,500.23 | 117,001.40 |
| 1999 | 8 | 44,051.35 | 2,725.51 | 33,610.26 | 268,882.05 |
| 2000 | 7 | 26,059.20 | 19,934.80 | 23,703.26 | 165,922.84 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 1,283,928.05 |

## Legal Office

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 9,350.00 |
| 1996 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 19,860.00 |
| 1997 | 2 | $23,174.06 | $ 1,800.00 | $ 12,487.03 | 24,974.06 |
| 1998 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1,500.00 |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 2,025.00 |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | . | 57,709.06 |

## Legislative Affairs

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 7 | $ 36,915.00 | $ 7,939.40 | $ 22,548.66 | $ 157,840.65 |
| 1997 | 6 | 44,999.50 | 21,475.70 | 39,240.41 | 235,442.43 |
| 1998 | 4 | 46,347.80 | 8,800.32 | 36,067.72 | 144,270.87 |
| 1999 | 2 | 48,779.74 | 4,788.20 | 26,783.97 | 53,567.94 |
| 2000 | 2 | 28,521.55 | 27,111.64 | 27,816.60 | 55,633.19 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 646,755.08 |

## Math and Science

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 4 | $ 43,893.58 | $ 26,439.19 | $ 32,840.15 | $ 131,360.58 |
| 1996 | 7 | 43,554.09 | 8,870.80 | 30,819.16 | 215,734.14 |
| 1997 | 5 | 46,225.80 | 32,430.96 | 38,815.13 | 194,075.64 |
| 1998 | 7 | 46,896.80 | 20,660.80 | 34,052.42 | 238,366.95 |
| 1999 | 7 | 48,906.83 | 26,679.77 | 42,528.06 | 297,696.44 |
| 2000 | 7 | 27,719.59 | 4,023.24 | 19,186.28 | 134,303.94 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 1,211,537.69 |

## Media Relations

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 2,074.00 |
| 1996 | 2 | $ 44,564.64 | $ 30,397.37 | $ 37,481.01 | 74,962.01 |
| 1997 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 23,607.60 |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 558.00 |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 101,201.61 |

## Nutrition

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 22,288.00 |
| 1996 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 18,624.00 |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 19,340.28 |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 42,071.52 |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 102,323.80 |

## Operations Management

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1996 | 8 | $ 23,244.49 | $ 5,447.50 | $ 14,400.50 | $ 115,203.99 |
| 1997 | 10 | 35,984.39 | 554.19 | 14,939.30 | 149,393.02 |
| 1998 | 8 | 23,301.68 | 6,773.28 | 12,949.42 | 103,595.32 |
| 1999 | 8 | 24,090.28 | 640.00 | 11,692.44 | 93,539.50 |
| 2000 | 4 | 16,753.46 | 5,847.66 | 10,907.15 | 43,628.61 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 505,360.44 |

## Program Quality Assurance

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 11,209.10 |
| 1996 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 20,592.90 |
| 1997 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 25,872.30 |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 2 | $ 15,058.36 | $ 1,275.00 | $ 8,166.68 | 16,333.36 |
| 2000 | 2 | 12,325.44 | 1,050.00 | 6,687.72 | 13,375.44 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 87,383.10 |

## Reading

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 14 | $ 50,237.25 | $ 2,999.10 | $ 34,505.28 | $ 483,073.85 |
| 1996 | 9 | 57,072.48 | 23,054.50 | 38,544.90 | 346,904.08 |
| 1997 | 4 | 47,702.88 | 14,987.88 | 32,022.16 | 128,088.63 |
| 1998 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 4,058.02 |
| 1999 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 4,449.63 |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 966,574.21 |

## School Business

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 8,025.00 |
| 1996 | 2 | $ 29,136.20 | $ 11,074.50 | $ 20,105.35 | 40,210.70 |
| 1997 | 2 | 40,549.00 | 9,876.60 | 25,212.80 | 50,425.60 |
| 1998 | 2 | 43,488.32 | 14,117.50 | 28,802.91 | 57,605.82 |
| 1999 | 2 | 46,361.07 | 14,989.44 | 30,675.26 | 61,350.51 |
| 2000 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 25,921.66 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 243,539.29 |

## School to Career

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 32,595.42 |
| 1996 | 2 | $ 8,988.00 | $ 7,848.16 | $ 8,418.08 | 16,836.16 |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 49,431.58 |

## Special Education Appeals

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 3 | $ 37,557.00 | $ 5,544.00 | $ 16,457.07 | $ 49,371.20 |
| 1996 | 5 | 32,340.75 | 8,437.50 | 15,984.45 | 79,922.25 |
| 1997 | 5 | 44,035.36 | 14,241.81 | 30,486.19 | 152,430.95 |
| 1998 | 3 | 39,711.00 | 37,691.25 | 38,767.52 | 116,302.57 |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 398,026.97 |

## Special Services

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | $ 30,494.98 |
| 1996 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1997 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1998 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1999 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2000 | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 30,494.98 |

## Student Assessment

| Fiscal Year | Number of Consultants | Maximum Payment | Minimum Payment | Average Payment | Total Consultant Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 6 | $ 40,221.30 | $ 3,141.00 | $ 19,959.13 | $ 119,754.80 |
| 1996 | 7 | 40,060.80 | 3,632.25 | 18,230.54 | 127,613.75 |
| 1997 | 4 | 21,840.12 | 17,365.79 | 20,467.13 | 81,868.52 |
| 1998 | 2 | 46,402.50 | 43,148.00 | 44,775.25 | 89,550.50 |
| 1999 | 2 | 51,426.10 | 1,463.40 | 26,444.75 | 52,889.50 |
| 2000 | 2 | 36,600.00 | 26,890.96 | 31,745.48 | 63,490.96 |
| Six-Year Total | | | | | 535,168.03 |

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